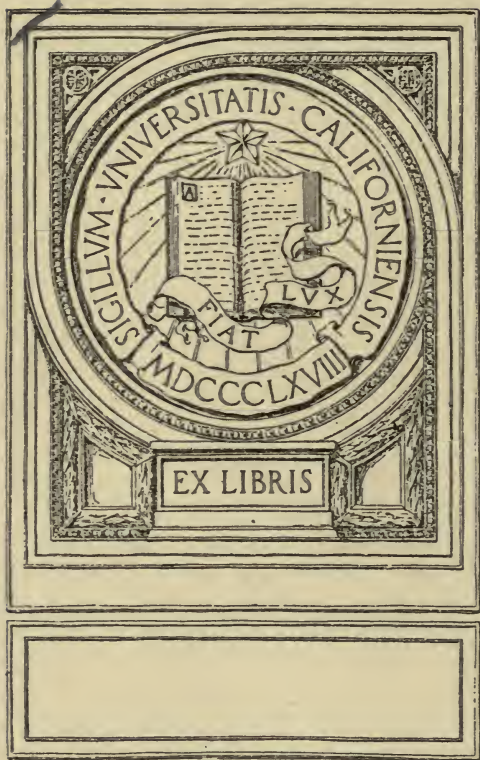


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GIVE ME THE YOUNG

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

WHAT IS AND WHAT MIGHT BE
IN DEFENCE OF WHAT MIGHT BE
THE TRAGEDY OF EDUCATION
THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS
THE COSMIC COMMONWEALTH
THE PROBLEM OF THE SOUL
THE CREED OF MY HEART

FOR PARTICULARS OF THESE VOLUMES
SEE THE END OF THIS BOOK

GIVE ME THE YOUNG

By EDMOND HOLMES

“By the breath of the schoolchildren
shall the State be saved.”

From the Talmud.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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TO THE
MEMBERS OF THE
ASSOCIATION

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activity that in it the normal restraints and sanctions, such as regard for law, for custom, for tradition, for religion, become comparatively inoperative, and it is left to the higher emotions to hold the lower in check. Hence it was that when the war came to an abrupt end and the demand for self-sacrifice and service ceased or seemed to cease, the lower desires and passions, being suddenly freed from the curbing pressure of the higher, developed an almost unparalleled energy and impatience of restraint.

Meanwhile the normal restraining influences had been further weakened by the social and political consequences of the war. The social and political regime which prevailed in most civilized countries in pre-war days, though democratic in outward form, was still largely feudal in spirit. But feudalism may be said to have committed suicide when Germany, the most highly feudalized of all countries, made its bid for world-power and fell; and there was nothing ready to take its place. We are passing through an epoch of transition in which much of what we had got to regard as fixed and immutable has gone into the melting-pot, with the result that the directing and controlling force of tradition and custom is weaker than it has ever been. No wonder, then, that the end of the war, with its sudden relaxation of an almost intolerable tension and the sudden cessation of its call for heroism and high adventure, was followed by a period of widespread demoralization as well as of political anarchy and social unrest.¹ This state of things is still with

¹ The demoralization of the "civilized" world is the resultant of many causes. I have indicated one of them.

us; and there are no signs of its passing away. Never, within the memory of man, was the standard of duty lower than it is to-day. Never was the law of the land less respected. Never were solemn engagements less binding. Never was dishonesty rife. Never was the "mania for owning things" more obsessive. Never was the pursuit of pleasure more absorbing. Never was sexual morality laxer. Never was anger more violent. Never was hatred more malignant. Never was selfishness, whether individual or collective, more virulent or more strongly entrenched. And though the need for honest and steady work has never been so great as it is to-day, when the whole world is waiting to be rebuilt, there has never been less willingness to work or less pride in good workmanship.

These are sweeping statements. I have qualified them with the words "within the memory of man." If, even as so qualified, they are overstatements, it cannot, I think, be denied that what they overstate is substantially true.¹ To what deep-seated malady do the symptoms which I have described point?

A friend of mine has suggested another. While the war lasted men were intent on winning it, and this one aim tended to supersede all others. When the war came to an abrupt end life was suddenly robbed of its central aim. There is nothing more demoralizing—so my friend contends—than to have no dominant purpose in life; for it is then open to any selfish or lawless desire to seize the vacated helm. Hence the need for a spiritual ideal to emerge from the existing chaos and take control of our aimless life.

¹ Whatever else may be doubtful, it is certain that in the sphere of conduct the traditional restraints and sanctions count for less to-day than they have done for many generations; and that this "go as you please" spirit is widely diffused, nearly all "civilized" countries being infected with it.

What is wrong with the world, and how is that wrong, whatever it may be, to be righted? I have said that the whole world needs to be rebuilt. When I said this I was thinking of its economic rebuilding. But if it is to be rebuilt economically, and if this rebuilding is to endure, it must also be rebuilt politically and socially. And if it is to be rebuilt politically and socially, and if this rebuilding is to endure, it must also, and above all, be rebuilt spiritually.

Here we come to the root of the whole matter. The foundations of the reconstructed world—economic, political and social—must be laid in the cement of a spiritual ideal. For if they are not so laid, they will be exposed to the corrosive influence of that moral materialism which we call selfishness; and as they gradually decay and crumble, the walls of the reconstructed world will begin to crack and “settle” and give other ominous signs of impending collapse. What is wrong with the world today, what was wrong with it before the war, what has been wrong with it for many centuries, is its practical atheism, its persistent refusal to respond to the appeal of an ideal to which it does homage with its lips—the ideal of self-sacrifice in the greatest of all causes, of uncalculating devotion to the Universal and the Divine.

The late Benjamin Kidd, shortly before he died, brought out a book called *The Science of Power*, which has gone through many “impressions.” In this book he diagnoses the existing situation, proposes a remedy, and gives directions for its application. His diagnosis of the existing situation is, I think, quite inadequate, and the directions that he

gives for applying the remedy are, I think, most misleading. But the remedy itself—the propagation among the young of the ideal of self-sacrifice—is assuredly the right one; and we shall do well to ask ourselves why it is needed and how it is to be applied.

According to our author the source of all our troubles is the maleficent activity of the “fighting male of the West,” whose pugnacity and selfishness have during the past half century received an immense stimulus from Darwinism.

Let us consider each of these propositions.

The fighting male of the West is no knight-errant. He has, and always has had, his full share of pugnacity and selfishness, but he has no monopoly of these anti-social qualities. The fighting males of the East—the Arab, the Mongol, and the Turk—have been not less fierce as fighters and more ruthless and oppressive as conquerors; and the same may be said, though the scale of their military operations has been much smaller, of the fighting males of Africa and North America. In recent years the fighting male of the West, thanks to his superior organization and his growing mastery, through physical science, of the secrets of material nature, and his consequent command of its resources, has become the most formidable of all fighters; and, without intending to do so, he has made of war a far more terrible engine of destruction than it had been before. But this has been on the whole his misfortune rather than his fault; though now that, with the progress of chemical research, a vision of destruction on a scale undreamed of, in circumstances of unimaginable horror, through the

use of explosives and poisonous gases in warfare, is beginning to startle him, it will be his fault if he does not reconsider his whole attitude towards war.

Nor can I think that Darwinism has played the wholly sinister part in man's moral and social life which Kidd ascribes to it. It is doubtless true that the popular misinterpretation of the familiar Darwinian phrases "struggle for existence," and "survival of the fittest" (a misinterpretation which Kidd himself seems to have endorsed), has done something to confirm and even intensify the natural selfishness of man's heart. But against this may surely be set the great service which Darwinism has rendered to mankind by substituting a kinetic for a static outlook on life and destiny—in other words, by familiarizing us with the idea of progressive development and so opening up to us a vista of spiritual progress, a vista which loses itself at last in the Infinite and the Ideal.

It is also true that Darwinism has undermined the foundations of official (and popular) Christianity. But as official Christianity has conspicuously failed to evangelize Christendom, and has too often been traitorously false to the spiritual ideal which is at the heart of its creed, it is possible that in undermining its foundations and so exposing the inherent unsoundness of its fundamental assumptions, Darwinism has rendered a service to the spiritual element in Christianity which will in the long run far outweigh whatever temporary loss of "faith" it may have caused.

For my own part I think that the teaching of Political Economy has done more to intensify selfishness, both individual and collective, and so

promote disunion and strife, than the spread of those ideas which we sum up under the general head of Darwinism. For, under the influence of Adam Smith and his successors, who idealized or seemed to idealize the actual practices of those who bought and sold, the business world in this and other countries persuaded itself that it was a sacred duty to buy all things—*human labour included*—in the cheapest, and sell them in the dearest market; and, in the effort to realize this inverted ideal, Capital systematically overworked and underpaid Labour, and thus sowed the seeds of a deadly harvest of class jealousy and hatred, which we are reaping now; while the various business interests, in their struggle for markets, continuously widened the scope of their operations till nations became joint-stock companies, and trade rivalry became international and degenerated at last into open warfare.

But whatever may have been the causes, remote or near, of our present troubles, the reality of them is indisputable, and to seek a remedy for them is the duty of all who have the welfare of the world at heart.

Before we can hope to find such a remedy we must carry our diagnosis of the existing situation a step further. The author of *The Science of Power* complains that the "individual efficient in his own interests" has got the upper hand in modern society, and that "civilization" is in consequence relapsing into "savagery." Our author, who is too impetuous and impatient a thinker to sift his facts with due care, has surely misread history. The social life of "savagery" is as a rule tribal; and

it is collective, not individual, selfishness which is the besetting sin of tribalism. Under the tribal regime the community is everything, and the individual, who lives his life under the pressure of rigid custom as well as of tribal collectivism, is nothing. There is too little individualism in savagery, not too much. The problem of the origin of Man's social life is one which Kidd has apparently omitted to study. He speaks of Darwinism, which he denounces as anti-social, as "the science of the individual efficient in his own interests," forgetting that from the earliest days *regard for his own interests* led the individual to combine with other individuals, to form societies and communities, in fine to *initiate a social life*. He tells us that "the first principle in the world of the efficient animal of Darwinism is the supremacy and omnipotence therein of individuals or groups of individuals efficient in their own interests," and that "the first principle, on the contrary, in the evolution of the social world of civilization lies in the subordination of individuals." In the former of these sentences the words "groups of individuals," which seem to have been thrown in as an afterthought and which play no further part in the development of our author's thesis, are all-important: *It was in the group efficient in its own interests that the subordination of the individual began*. For how could a group secure its own interests if its individual members were not ready to subordinate themselves to, and even sacrifice themselves for, the group as a whole?

The "group efficient in its own interests" is the link between the individual and the Cosmic or

Universal Commonwealth. Or rather it is the first link in a chain which has an infinity of links. To say that "there has never been since civilization began any reconciliation between the morality of the individual efficient in his own interests and the morality of evolving civilization . . . that the two things are inherently incompatible" is to flout the teaching of experience. It was in the *tribe*—a self-centred community built up by individuals efficient in their own interests—that the lesson of the subordination of the individual was first and most thoroughly learnt. Tribal devotion was a high-water mark which our "evolving civilization" has lost and not yet regained. So far is individualism—individual selfishness—from being of the essence of "savagery" that it would be nearer the truth to say that it is of the essence of "civilization."

For it is with the multiplication of communities, or rather of types of community, which is characteristic of "civilization," and with the consequent weakening of communal pressure, that individualism comes in. No man can give whole-hearted service to many masters; and no man can give the maximum of devotion to many communities. And as communal devotion wavers and weakens, "self" finds its opportunity and begins to play its sinister part. The more complex the state of society, the more will communities and sub-communities multiply and the more scope will there be for the outgrowth of individualism. Kidd seems to think that the choice for each of us lies between devotion to his own material interests and response to the "call of the Universal." This is indeed our supreme and

ultimate choice, but we are seldom required to make it. For the claims of this or that community are for ever interposing themselves between the material or quasi-material interests of the individual and the beacon-light of the supreme ideal; and in the attempt to adjust those claims one will find opportunities enough and to spare for the surrender and the transcendence of self.

To ask one to pass at a single step from absorption in self to response to the call of the Universal is to overstrain human nature. Man must be allowed to have many lesser loyalties if his supreme loyalty is to be a reality, not a pretence. In other words, he must serve a long apprenticeship in the highest of all arts, that of self-sacrifice. For if self-sacrifice is to redeem the world it must free itself at last from every taint of selfishness. And this must needs be a long and laborious process. For if devotion to a community or a cause is to free itself from the taint of selfishness, it must always have at the heart of it devotion to a wider community and a greater cause, till we come at last to the widest of all communities—the Universal Order, the Cosmic Commonwealth, the Kingdom of God; and to the greatest of all causes—the service of the One, the All. This is the golden rule of sociology and ethics. I have formulated it elsewhere; but I can scarcely repeat it too often, or insist too strongly on its fundamental truth.

To learn the lesson of disinterested devotion :
✧ this is the panacea for all our troubles. We may or may not be able to make a conscious response to the call of the Universal, to make a solemn dedication of self to the service of God. But to whatever

service we may dedicate ourselves, we must see to it that what we give is given freely, unreservedly, uncalculatingly. For whatever is so given is an offering laid on the altar of the Universal God, who is "sought of them that asked not for him, and found of them that sought him not."

"Nay and of hearts that follow other gods
In simple faith, their prayers arise to me. . . .

For I am the Receiver and the Lord
Of every sacrifice."

Yes, of every sacrifice that is offered with a clean heart and in a self-forgetful spirit.

But when and where and how is the greatest of all lessons, the lesson of disinterested devotion, to be learnt? We cannot begin to learn it too early. On this point Kidd is surely right. The adult who has not learnt the lesson in childhood will in all probability never learn it. Or, if he does begin to learn it, it is practically certain that he will never master it. He may indeed, in a great crisis, realize the wonder and the splendour of self-sacrifice; and while the crisis lasts he may live up to his new-found conviction and play the hero or the martyr and count his loss as gain. But the chances are that, when the crisis is over, the fetters which his past life have forged will bind him again, and the "emotion of the ideal" which swayed him for a while will lose its power.

For consider what his past life has been. A materialistic conception of life dominated the environment into which he was born. Self-seeking was in the air that he breathed. While he was being educated he was systematically exposed to two

demoralizing influences, the fear of external punishment and the hope of external reward. In school, where he first realized that he was a member of a community, his communal life was compulsorily de-socialized, co-operation with his classmates being strictly forbidden, while competition with them was deliberately forced upon him. When he grew up and went out into the world, he found that the life of the world was in the main a chaotic scramble for possessions and pleasures, that individualism was rampant in human society, and that when men did co-operate the basis of co-operation was too often sordid and selfish. Religion, as it was presented to him, was largely a matter of doctrine and ceremonial, and his acceptance of its teaching, if he did accept it, was formal, not real. He may indeed have learnt by heart some of the altruistic precepts of Christianity; but in practice those precepts, as he could not fail to see, were more honoured in the breach than the observance; and their influence on him, if they ever influenced him, was therefore evanescent, the precepts themselves being either wholly forgotten or else remembered as one remembers a formula, a rule, or a date.

How can the victim of such an environment and such an upbringing be expected to learn the lesson of disinterested devotion? The tradition into which he was born, the mould into which he has hardened will almost certainly be too strong for him. The sudden and complete transformation of one's ideals which is known in the religious world as "conversion," is an exceedingly rare phenomenon, and its effect is seldom permanent. The adult man of

to-day is not past praying for, but he is not a hopeful subject for the missionary labours of the prophet or the reformer. Where, then, does our hope lie? The analogies of plant life suggest an answer to this question. The stubborn wood of the adult tree cannot easily be induced to change the direction or the mode of its growth; but the sapling, being tender and flexible, will quickly and freely respond to one's guiding hand. Our hope lies in the inexperience, the sensitiveness, the adaptability, and—above all—the inborn idealism of the young.

CHAPTER II

COMPULSORY IDEALISM—ITS FAILURE IN GERMANY

How and by whom is the human sapling to be trained, trained in the direction of the spiritual ideal which is to redeem our fallen world? In the *Science of Power* these questions are answered with a confidence which rises to the level of enthusiasm; but the answer has been over-hastily given and has not been based on a careful study of what is, to say the least, a complex and difficult problem. Let the teachers in this and other countries be instructed to drill the idea of self-sacrifice into the minds of their pupils, and—*hey presto!*—in a single generation the whole world will be completely transformed!

Alas! no, this miracle will not happen. The mills of God grind very slowly; and impatience for results will retard rather than accelerate their movement. It needs the skill and inspiration of the master gardener to train the human sapling in the direction of its own spiritual ideal. To assume that every teacher is a master gardener and that the conventional methods of training the young are the right methods is a profound mistake. Yet it is on this mistake that Kidd bases the whole of the constructive part of his book.

In order to prove his point Kidd holds up to our admiration the example of Germany, which

drilled into its children the ideal of patriotism, and did this so successfully that in the late war the German people made, as he contends, unparalleled sacrifices.

The part which education, as it is practised in Germany, played in the war, deserves to be carefully studied. The Germans are the most slavishly docile of all peoples; and if the experiment of drilling a spiritual ideal into the young could succeed in any country it might be expected to succeed in theirs. What was the ideal which the German teachers were instructed to set before their pupils? Was it a spiritual ideal? Not in the deeper sense of these words. It was patriotism, as the word has always been understood in Germany, the patriotism of a separatist people, a people which, if it does not actually hold itself aloof from other peoples, wishes to dominate them and use them for its own profit and advantage.

A great German, who happened to be free from patriotic bias, has criticized in scathing terms the separatist tendencies of German patriotism. "We were ordered to be patriots," said Heine, "and we were patriots, for we do all that our rulers bid us. But this patriotism must not be confounded with the feelings which bear the same name in France. To a Frenchman patriotism means that his heart is warmed, that this warmth extends and diffuses itself, that his love embraces not only his immediate surroundings, but the whole of France, the whole of the civilized world. A German's patriotism, on the contrary, means that his heart contracts, that it shrinks like leather in the cold, that he hates all that is foreign, that he is no more

a citizen of the world, no more a European, but only a narrow German." As far as it goes this indictment still holds good. But since Heine wrote, Germany, as the result of a series of successful wars, has added aggressiveness to its separatism. It has interested itself in the rest of mankind, but chiefly for selfish purposes of its own. It has thought of other people as "outlanders" to be hated and despised, as subjects to be despotically ruled, as slaves to be worked at the will of their (German) taskmasters, as the owners of wealth to be plundered, of resources to be exploited, of lands to be annexed. Patriotism, as it has been forcibly instilled into the youth of Germany, is a sentiment which regards its own immediate object as an end in itself, which has no larger or more generous sentiment at the heart of it, which does not look beyond its own limits except with aggressive or jealous or thievish eyes. In fine, it is the patriotism of a predatory tribe, of a gang of robbers, of a pack of wolves. Where such a sentiment prevails a man will sacrifice himself unhesitatingly for the community, but he will do so from force of habit (for he will probably have been drilled into automatism), from fear of punishment (for the discipline of the wolf pack is strict and stern), or in the hope of sharing in the spoils and the other prizes of victory.

Such is the type of patriotism which the teachers of Germany have been compelled to instil into their pupils. What methods have the teachers employed? The conventional methods which are in use, and have long been in use, in all but a few exceptional schools. "By means of regula-

tion, instruction and apologetic justification," said a pre-war writer in the *Neue Rundschau*, "patriotism is to-day taught by zealots like a common school lesson with a merciless rigid catechism. Love to the Fatherland is made mechanical, it is drilled into pupils like a dead, disbelieved religion." If patriotism is to be "taught" in school, it is bound to be taught "like a common school lesson with a merciless rigid catechism," it is bound to be "drilled into the pupils," like the multiplication table, like the rules of grammar, like the definitions of geometry, like the names and dates of the kings of one's country, like the formulated creeds of a "dead, disbelieved religion." For the ordinary teacher in the ordinary school there is no other way of teaching it. The pupils who happen to be diligent and docile will make the usual mechanical response to this teaching. They will learn by heart what they are required to learn. They will do what they are required to do. But what of the careless, the lazy, the rebellious? If they are to learn patriotism they must be bribed or bullied into learning it. In the interest of what is supposed to be a spiritual ideal an appeal must be made to base motives, to fear, to greed, to vanity. How much of spirituality will remain in the ideal which has been propagated by such methods as these? Will not the ideal inevitably share in the degradation of the teacher who has had to resort to such methods, of the pupil who has been their victim? To teach disinterested devotion by an appeal to self-interest is to de-idealize a high ideal in the very act of presenting it for acceptance.

The plain truth is that if and so far as the

compulsory teaching of patriotism in German schools wakened a response in the German people, young and old, it did so—in part at least—because the ideal (if one must call it so), as it was presented to the young, made an appeal to their latent selfishness which overshadowed its call for self-sacrifice, or rather which tempted them to look beyond self-sacrifice to a material reward for it, instead of regarding it (as the true patriot does) as a glorious end in itself.

I will try to explain what I mean. A sentiment can be fostered. It cannot possibly be "taught." A noble sentiment, such as the disinterested devotion of the patriot, owes nothing to official compulsion or direction. What it owes to environment, to tradition, to example, to precept, though buried in the past, has duly registered itself in the patriot's subconscious self. His love of his country, being essentially unselfish and unaggressive, holds itself in reserve, and may easily seem to be dormant, in times of national prosperity and peace. When a great crisis comes and there is a sudden and urgent demand for self-sacrifice, the sentiment awakes spontaneously from its apparent slumber, operates freely and uncalculatingly, and asks for no sanction and no reward. But when official sanction is given to a base self-regarding sentiment, it receives an impetus which carries it far along its ill-omened way. The reason for this is obvious. The selfish instincts, however strong they may be, are as a rule held in partial check by the quasi-authoritative disapproval which they have to encounter, and the consequent condemnation of them by one's own social self. But when the

said instincts are deliberately appealed to by those whom one naturally looks up to for instruction and guidance, the official sanction which is thus given to them doubles, and more than doubles, their power for evil. More especially is this the case when the appeal to them is made in childhood, the period in which conscience is still in the making and sensitiveness to the influence of authoritative example and precept is most acute.

So far, then, as the teaching of patriotism in German schools was a success, it succeeded not because of the appeal which it made to the "emotion of the ideal," but because it subordinated that appeal to another which moved along an altogether lower level of feeling and purpose, because the type of patriotism which it presented to the young was in keeping with the methods by which it was drilled into them, because the element of pure gold, of spiritual idealism, in it was far outweighed by various baser metals, by appeals to self-interest, to greed, to vanity, to love of power, not to speak of such anti-human sentiments as envy, jealousy, supercilious contempt and rancorous hate.¹

But, after all, was Germany's educational experiment a success, even from its own point of view? It was given a fair trial, for it was begun soon after the Franco-German War, and it was carried on with intensive energy from the time of

¹ A writer in the *Nineteenth Century and After* says that "Germany has proved the power of authority to shape the mind of a people. It is a frightful discovery." For "shape" in the former sentence I would read "misshape." Authority can shape the mind amiss. It cannot, by its own pressure, shape it aright. If the mind is to be shaped aright it must shape itself.

William the Second's accession to the throne (1889). Did it achieve anything of real and lasting value? Kidd, who seems to think in hyperboles, tells us that it "has produced an example in history of organized self-sacrifice so colossal and so admirable as to appear almost superhuman."

Let it be freely admitted that the Germans displayed great heroism and made great sacrifices during the prolonged agony of the late war. Kidd would have us believe that this was entirely due to the systematic teaching of patriotism in the German schools and colleges. But surely there were other contributory causes. To begin with, there was the force of habit. The greater part of the manhood of Germany had passed through the army; and in no army has the discipline of drill been so ruthlessly thorough or so deliberately destructive of freedom and initiative as in the German. It seems to have been the fixed purpose of the General Staff to convert the rank and file into automata—puppets in human form who would advance (for example) in the face of a murderous fire without flinching, because they had been wound up to do so and could not, if they would, run away.

Closely associated with the force of habit was the force of fear. In no other army has punishment been so severe, so freely resorted to, or (since the abolition of flogging in ours) so frequently brutal in character. It was by an appeal to fear, more than by any other method, that the discipline on which the German army prided itself was developed, and it was by the force of fear supplementing the force of habit that its discipline was

maintained. A third contributory cause was the blind belief of the Germans in the supreme wisdom of their rulers and leaders and in the invincibility of their country. A fourth cause, which was the reverse side of the third, was their overweening contempt for other nations and other armies. One is the more ready to make sacrifices for a given cause when one is confident of its early triumph. A fifth cause was the promise of world-dominion which was made to the nation, and the hope of plunder which animated the army in all its grades. A sixth cause—the last and, let us hope, the most potent of all—was the natural spontaneous love of one's fatherland which is instinctive in almost every breast. All these causes, with the possible exception of the fourth, would have operated with almost equal efficiency if patriotism had not been taught to a single German child. Why, then, does Kidd attribute to the systematic inculcation of patriotism in school and college, and to it only, the "almost superhuman example of organized self-sacrifice" which Germany gave to the world in the late war?

Here a question suggests itself which has probably been asked by every reader of *The Science of Power*. Was Germany the only country which gave to the world an example of organized self-sacrifice through all the trials and horrors of the war? Kidd himself has answered this question. "Throughout the war," he tells us, "the capacity for sacrifice in men has been exhibited on an unparalleled scale under the sternest conditions. It has been seen continuously enabling great aggregates of men, amounting in total to many

millions, to meet resolutely almost certain death in massed formation in the service of Germany. It produced the same example of sacrifice on a stupendous scale in the case of other countries engaged in the war. It gave civilization the example of millions of men enrolled by Great Britain and her peoples by voluntary enlistment going to meet death in the service of their cause with a cheerful and considered judgment on a scale which under such conditions is without any precedent in history."

This admission is significant. In no country has the formal teaching of patriotism counted for so little as in our own. Our countrymen, whose lives are more under the control of instinct than those of any other people, have felt intuitively that patriotism cannot be "taught." In a French book which I recently read, a boy says to his father: "A l'école on nous dit qu'il faut être patriote." To which the father replies: "On vous dit ça. Dommage. Le patriotisme, c'est comme l'amour, ça échappe au commandement. C'est une fonction naturelle."¹ So little do we British reflect on what we do or leave undone that we have never seriously asked ourselves why patriotism has not been taught in our schools. But if we were to ask ourselves this question we should probably answer it in some such words as those which I have just quoted. At any rate we have felt, if our thought has not advanced beyond the stage of feeling, that the love which prompts to self-sacrifice "échappe au commandement," that if it is not there waiting to awake and energize, no

¹ *Ce qu'en pense Potterat*, by Benjamin Vallotton,

amount of teaching will generate it, that the dream of drilling it into the young by quasi-Prussian methods is of all dreams the vainest.

And yet, as Kidd admits, or rather insists, it was this country, in which patriotism has never been taught or even consciously fostered, which "gave civilization the example of millions of men enrolled by voluntary enlistment going to meet death in the service of their cause with a cheerful and considered judgment on a scale which under such conditions is without any precedent in history." May I not fairly claim that in paying this tribute to British patriotism Kidd has given his own case away?

So far, indeed, was the systematic teaching of patriotism in Germany from working the miracle which Kidd ascribes to it, that it did not even produce a sound and durable brand of the sentiment which it was its purpose to create. If Ludendorf, who must have had his finger on the pulse of the German people during the years of the war, may be believed, the downfall of Germany was due to the patriotism of her people having given way under the triple strain of privation at home, moral infection from Russia (after the Revolution), and incipient defeat in the field. "Looking back," he writes, "I say that our decline began clearly with the outbreak of the revolution in Russia. On the one hand the Government was dominated by the fear that the infection would spread, and on the other by the feeling of their helplessness to instil fresh strength into the masses of the people and to strengthen their warlike ardour, waning as it was through a

combination of innumerable circumstances." The worst of compulsory, State-directed patriotism is that the masses naturally look to the Government for the supply, from time to time, of fuel for the flame of their patriotic ardour. Where that flame is the result of a more spontaneous combustion, it may be trusted to find fresh fuel for itself. Where it has been deliberately kindled, it rests with those who kindled it to keep it alive; and if the fuel which it needs is not forthcoming, the flame will sooner or later burn low and die out.

It is possible that Ludendorf, in his desire to exculpate himself and his policy, does less than justice to the spirit of his fellow-countrymen. It is, however, clear from the following passage in Sir Philip Gibbs' book, *Realities of War*, that Ludendorf's indictment, if it cannot be fully substantiated, is at least borne out by many significant facts: "Ludendorf writes of the broken *moral* of the German troops, and of how his men surrendered to single troopers of ours, while whole detachments gave themselves up to tanks. 'Retiring troops,' he wrote, 'greeted one particular division (the cavalry) that was going up fresh and gallantly to the attack, with shouts of Blacklegs! and War-prolongers!' That is true. When the Germans left Bohain they shouted out to the French girls: 'The English are coming. Bravo! The war will soon be over!' On a day in September, when British troops broke the Drocourt-Quéant line, I saw the Second German Guards coming along in batches like companies, and after they had been put in barbed wire enclosures they laughed, and clapped at the sight of other crowds

of comrades coming down as prisoners. I thought then, 'Something has broken in the German spirit.' For the first time the end seemed very near." It is true that, as Gibbs admits, "the German rear-guards fought stubbornly in many places," and that the machine-gun detachments in particular often showed great heroism. But their efforts were unavailing. The ebb of the tide was too strong for them. "Something had broken in the German spirit."

It was the same in the Imperial Navy. The activities of the Fleet had for some time been partially paralysed by the growing disaffection of the crews. But as the end of the war drew near there was a sudden and dramatic change from disaffection, with sporadic attempts at mutiny, to open mutiny on a large scale. "In the first days of November," writes Sir John Buchan in his *History of the War*, "the stage had been set for a great sea-battle. Her (Germany's) High Seas Fleet had been ordered out, but it would not move. The dry-rot, which had been growing during the four years' inaction, had crumbled all its discipline. On November 4 the red flag was hoisted on the battleship *Kaiser*. The mutiny spread to the Kiel shipyards and workshops, where there had always been a strong Socialist element; a Council of soldiers, sailors and workmen was formed; and the mutineers captured the barracks and took possession of the town. The trouble spread like wildfire to Hamburg, Bremen, Lubeck and adjacent ports, and it was significant that in every case the soldiers and sailors took the lead."

On the whole, then, it may be said that in the

fighting forces of Germany there was a failure of purpose, when once the tide of success had begun to turn, to which there was no parallel in our army even in the dark days of March and April 1918, or in our navy even when the submarine menace was most deadly.

As it was in the fighting line so it was on the home front. The civilian population of Germany was no doubt much more severely tried by privation than ours;¹ but if every allowance be made for this fact, it must, I think, be admitted that in the later stages of the war the peace-at-any-price spirit was stronger and more widely diffused in Germany than in this country, where indeed it was confined to an insignificant and despised minority, the nation as a whole having never faltered for a moment from its resolution to see things through, and having reached its highest level of determination when its outlook was blackest and its peril greatest.²

¹ The civilian population of Germany was less severely tried than that of Belgium, of Poland, of Serbia, of devastated France; but in none of these countries was there any faltering in the resolution of the people to

“bear it out even to the edge of doom.”

² Our Allies were as resolute as we were. It might have been thought that the great disaster of March 1918, which seemed to have brought their cause to the brink of ruin, would have shaken their and our resolution. But, on the contrary, it strengthened it. “The Allied nations,” says Buchan, “had faced the peril with an admirable calmness and courage. There was little recrimination, no hint of panic, and a very general drawing together of classes and a girding of loins to meet any demand which the future might bring. America increased her recruiting, and strained every nerve to quicken the dispatch of troops, so that she might soon stand in line with her Allies. France, unshaken by a menace which struck at her very heart,

What, then, was the net result of the great educational experiment on which Kidd lavishes ecstatic praise, the experiment of drilling into the German people the ideal of *Deutschland über alles*, by stamping it, dogmatically and dictatorially, on the minds and hearts of the young? *A minus quantity*. Had the ideal which was to be thus inculcated been genuinely spiritual, the experiment would have aborted at the outset, for a spiritual ideal can no more be propagated in its purity by methods which are unworthy of it than water can pass, without being polluted, through a network of foul and corroded pipes. That the experiment was possible was due to the fact that the demand for disinterested devotion was subordinated to an appeal to an altogether lower range of motives—in other words, that the base metal element in the ideal far outweighed the gold. Yet even so the experiment was a failure, the net result of it being, I repeat, a minus quantity. An equally inspiring and more durable type of patriotism evolved itself during the war in countries in which, as in our own, there had never been any teaching of the kind which Kidd advocates, in which the cult of patriotism had been almost ostentatiously neglected, in which love of the fatherland had been

showed that quiet and almost prosaic resolution to win or perish which two years before had inspired her troops at Verdun. In Britain the threats of industrial strikes disappeared as if by magic. The workers forwent their Easter holiday of their own accord in order to make up by an increased output for our lost guns and stores. It seemed as if the good spirit of 1914 had been reborn, when men spoke not of rights or interests, but of what service they might be privileged to give to their country."

allowed to spring from its own roots, to grow at its own pace, and in general to take care of itself. The one country in which patriotism gave way at last under the prolonged strain of the war was the country in which it had been most assiduously and most systematically "taught."

CHAPTER III

COMPULSORY IDEALISM—ITS FAILURE IN CHRISTENDOM

THE failure of the educational experiment which Adalbert Falk, the Prussian Minister of Education, initiated and which the Emperor William II carried on ought not to have surprised the thoughtful student of history, for it was but the reproduction, on a smaller scale and on a lower spiritual level, of the greatest and most tragic of all failures—the failure of Christianity to evangelize Christendom.

Why has Christianity failed to evangelize Christendom? That it has failed is indisputable. But what has been the cause, or what have been the causes of its failure? The author of *The Science of Power* has been perplexed by this problem and has made a half-hearted but wholly unsuccessful attempt to solve it. The ill-success of his attempt is due partly to his tendency to lay the blame for whatever goes wrong in this world of ours on his *bête noire*, the “fighting Pagan of the West,” partly to his inability to realize the limitations of education as it is, or to fathom the possibilities of education as it might be. He sees that at the heart of Christianity there is an exalted spiritual ideal which has the right, and, if it could but have

fair play, would have the might, to rule the world. The words in which he sets forth this ideal are worth quoting: "By far the greatest attempt hitherto made by the West to apply the emotion of the ideal to the cultural inheritance of civilization has been made through Christianity. In this religion the social passion transfigures and transcends all other emotions. The sanction for sacrifice is the greatest that can be conceived. Christianity was accepted by the West and has been for centuries taught by the West throughout the world, as the religion of universal peace. It is essentially, among all religions, the religion of brotherhood, of love, of goodwill among men. It proclaims these conditions uncompromisingly as universal, as operative beyond the boundaries of all creeds, and as extending even to enemies. It recognizes neither race nor colour nor nationality in the presence of the all-subordinating ideals which it uplifts."

What has been the fate of these all-subordinating ideals? What has the religion which uplifts them done for the peoples that profess it? Our author has answered this question: "The terrible dominating heredity of the fight in the West has made of this ideal throughout history a cause of blood and war and of world-embracing conflict. The unfolding of the Christian religion in the West has been a record of fighting and slaughter aiming at worldly triumph which is absolutely unparalleled in any other phase of the history of the race. . . . The principal theme of the history of the West is the theme of these universal wars, of slaughter carried on by nations and peoples in

the name of the principles of the religion of universal peace. In these conflicts, despite all appearances to the contrary, right, truth and justice have been almost without exception, just as in the pagan world, made to rest in the last resort on successful force. The combatants on each side proclaim the principles of Christianity to be part of their cause. And after their victories they carry the battle-stained banners of their wars even into the churches and temples of the Christian religion, exactly in the manner of the pagan systems of old. . . . Western civilization throughout history has professed to be the civilization founded on Christianity. Yet almost every development of the West has been based on war, and has taken place with the menace of war or the fact of war accompanying and pervading it."

This is more a statement of what has happened in Christendom than an explanation of why it has happened. Incidentally it corrects a misstatement which its author's anti-Darwinian prejudice had tempted him to make in the first chapter of his book. He tells us that in pre-Darwinian days "the Western nations, even in their darkest hours of struggle, had ever placed before themselves and regarded with unfaltering gaze an inward vision. They had conceived our civilization as gradually ripening, through the perfection of principles inherent in it, towards an age of universal peace and balanced harmony among all the nations of the earth": and he goes on to say that, with the triumph of Darwinism, there was a pagan retrogression from this noble dream towards the conscious idealization of force. The picture which

he has drawn of the state of Christendom in pre-Darwinian days is not in keeping with this theory. An inward vision which is unceasingly obscured by the smoke of battle and the mephitic vapour of ambition and greed, does not count and can scarcely be said to exist. The fighting man of the West was as much a "pagan" at heart in the Dark and the Middle Ages as he was in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early years of this; and what he "regarded with unfaltering gaze" was the smoke and the vapour, rather than the inward vision which these obscured.

But how does it help us to know that the "fighting man of the West" has played the sinister part in the history of Christendom which Kidd assigns to him? The ultimate responsibility for his misdeeds rests not with him, but with the Church (or, after the Reformation, the Churches) that educated him from his tenderest years. The Churches, according to Kidd, were the "historic centres for centuries of the idealisms of the West." If, as an adult, the fighting pagan was unamenable to their influence, there was surely a time in his life when they might have moulded him, or at least trained him, to their will. He was placed in the arms of the Church at his baptism. It was for her to fold him to her breast, to initiate him into the simpler mysteries of the religion which she professed, to instil into him the spiritual ideal which was at the heart of her creed, and in general to train him in the way in which he should go. Had she risen to the level of this opportunity, had she humanized the fighting pagan in his childhood and adolescence, had she taught him to walk in the footsteps of his

Master, had she made him a Christian in spirit as well as in name, the transformation of the social life of the West for which we are still waiting might have been accomplished long ago. It is the failure of the Church, not the misdeeds of her children, which we have to inquire into and, if possible, explain. For the misdeeds of her children do but reflect and prove her failure as a teacher. It was because she played her part badly that they went so far astray. It is idle for her, when she complains that Christendom is to-day more pagan than Christian, to lay the blame for this on the "hardness of man's heart." She had man's heart in her keeping while it was still tender and pliable. She might have trained it in the direction of its own inward ideal. Why did she allow it to grow hard along ugly lines—the lines of anger and violence, of selfishness and greed?

This is the question which Kidd ought to have asked himself and which I will now try to answer. The failure of the *ecclesia docens* was the resultant of many causes. For one thing, it failed because it was a church, an institution, an organized society of self-willed and selfish men. To institutionalize a religion, to provide it with a formal constitution, with an elaborate ritual, with a theology and a casuistry, with creeds and catechisms and canonical scriptures, is to run the risk of de-idealizing and de-spiritualizing it, of evaporating its essence, of mechanicalizing its life. The risk—nay, the certainty. The more complex the machinery of church government, the lower the level of the Church's spiritual life. The more complete the ascendancy of the symbol or system

of symbols, the more complete the eclipse of the thing symbolized, the inward light. The great religions of the world have failed, one and all, to keep the faith, the sacred flame of spiritual idealism, which was committed to their keeping, and the depth of their failure has been proportioned to the width of their dominion and the splendour of their apparent success. The genius for organization which the Christian Church inherited from Imperial Rome ensured the outward and visible triumph of Christianity. In doing so it ensured its inward and spiritual decay.

I have said that the Christian Church was a society of self-willed and selfish men. I do not wish to suggest that its members have been by nature more self-willed and selfish than the rest of mankind. They have been for the most part ordinary men, with neither more nor less than their "fair share" of self-will and selfishness. But the Church to which they belonged has been exposed from its earliest days to the most insidious of all temptations, the temptation to exploit for purposes of its own the high example and pure idealism of its Founder, and its own supposed monopoly of the grace and favour of God; and so far as it has yielded to this temptation it has raised self-will and selfishness, both individual and corporate, to an inconceivably high power. That it has yielded to this temptation, and that it has been further tempted to subordinate devotion to God and Christ to devotion to itself, the history of Christendom has fully proved. For though Christianity has always professed to be the religion of brotherly love and world-wide peace, the greed

and ambition, half spiritual, half secular, of the Christian Church has ever been a fruitful source of intrigues and quarrels and open wars, a more fruitful source even than the secular greed and ambition of kings and feudal lords, or the innate pugnacity of the "fighting pagan of the West."

Then, again, the Church has on principle been intolerant and separatist. Its claim to have been divinely founded and commissioned, to be the sole guardian of the oracles of God, the sole depository of the knowledge of God, the sole dispenser of the grace of God, has led it to hold itself aloof from all other religions and churches, to condemn, and to arrogate to itself the right to stamp out as false doctrine, all teaching that differed from its own. And being itself intolerant and separatist, it has had no choice but to teach intolerance and separatism, the most anti-human of all sentiments, to its children, young and old.

Yet, in spite of itself, in spite of all its sins and shortcomings, the Church has preached and taught, or tried to teach, Christ crucified. Why, then, has it so signally failed to instil the ideal of Christ crucified, the ideal of self-sacrifice for love of God and man, into the hearts of its children? Because of its profound ignorance of the first principles of education. Its initial assumption that a spiritual ideal can be taught, and must be taught, dogmatically and dictatorially, that it can be drilled, and must be drilled, into the souls of the young, "like an ordinary school lesson with a merciless rigid catechism," is unfathomably false; for it bases itself on the further assumption that the power of responding to the ideal is not in human

nature, that the child has no inherent capacity for or inclination towards self-sacrifice, and therefore that the ideal, instead of being helped to evolve itself from within, must be imposed on his conscience from without. So entirely is this fallacious assumption of the essence of official Christianity, that under the title of the doctrine of Original Sin it has been taught as a vital part of the Christian faith. The child is taught from his earliest days to regard himself as being by nature a "child of wrath" and the "enemy of God." He is therefore taught to distrust himself and all his desires and impulses, and to rely exclusively on his teacher for direction and stimulus and disciplinary control. The effect of such teaching is, of course, to paralyse the power of responding to a high appeal, to deaden the "emotion of the ideal," which is latent in his heart.

The presentation by the *ecclesia docens* of the ideal of self-sacrifice is in keeping with its initial assumption. Instead of being allowed to make its own appeal, by its inherent nobility and beauty, to the nascent idealism of the child, the ideal or rather the duty of self-sacrifice is presented to him as part of an elaborate scheme of salvation which must be accepted in its entirety or rejected, and of which each detail is as much an object of "faith" as is the ideal which is, or ought to be, the life of the whole scheme. In other words, the highest of all ideals is degraded, by the manner of its presentation, to the level of the quasi-mechanical scheme of salvation in which it plays its part and to the yet lower level of the most trivial detail in that scheme; for it is the weakness of machinery that

the failure of a single nut or bolt may imperil the working of the whole machine. Can we wonder that an ideal which is so presented makes but a feeble appeal to the heart of the child, which indeed is waiting all the while to welcome it, but to welcome it as an ideal to be inspired by and to live up to, not as an article of belief to be committed to memory and recited at the word of command?

The Christian ideal, then, is so presented to the child as to offer him the minimum of attraction. Indeed it seems to be taken for granted by his pastors and masters that it will not attract him; for his own willing co-operation in the matter is not only not invited but may almost be said to be deliberately discouraged. How, then, is the ideal to be instilled into him? It is not to be instilled into him. Instilment would be too slow a process. It is to be drilled into him as secular subjects have been drilled in all ages, and are being drilled even now in this enlightened twentieth century, into the victims of the conventional methods of education. The Christian ideal will be imparted to him as an item in the general body of Christian doctrine—doctrine which, if he cannot master it in the sense of inwardly digesting and assimilating it, he can at least master in the sense of learning it by heart. In order to induce him to apply himself to this uncongenial task, the usual appeal must be made to a low range of motives, to the hope of reward, to the fear of punishment, to the competitive instinct, to self-interest in all its forms. And this is what goes by the name of religious teaching. This is how the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice, of unselfish service, of response to the call of the

Universal, has been commended and is still being commended by the Christian Church to the eager heart of the child. In the attempt to teach the great lesson of disinterested devotion a deliberate and persistent appeal has been made to interested motives. And then the exponents of Christian doctrine are surprised that the ideal which Christianity lives to proclaim is in practice ignored, if not actually rejected, by Christendom: they are surprised that to-day, after fifteen centuries of Christian teaching and Christian profession, men are as self-centred, as self-willed, and as self-indulgent, as they were in pre-Christian days. Can they not see that they themselves have de-idealized and de-spiritualized their spiritual ideal, first by their manner of presenting and then by their method of enforcing it? And can they not see that when they set their pupils, as they have too often done, an example of autocratic self-will and unsympathetic harshness and impatient anger, they are trampling in the mud the very banner which it is their mission to bear on high—for what is the value of self-sacrifice if it does not begin and end in sympathy and love? ¹

The pupils of the Church are of all ages, for the Church claims dominion over the souls of the faithful from the cradle to the grave. As it has dealt with the young, so it has dealt, *mutatis mutandis*, with the adult and the old. When it was at the heyday of its power it converted the heathen, if milder methods failed, at the point of the sword. And those who fell away from its

¹ The problem of the religious training of the young will be more fully dealt with in a later chapter.

teaching it racked in the torture chamber and burnt at the stake. Or, if the apostasy was on a large scale, it preached a Holy War against the apostates, and when it stormed their cities, it massacred them in thousands, men, women and children. And so complete was its belief in its own educational methods and in its right to employ such methods, that it treated the wholesale burning of heretics as a public festival and called it, in all seriousness, an "act of faith."

In playing this sinister part the Church allowed its educational zeal to carry it too far. Example is said to be better than precept; and had the Church preached the gospel of charity and peace it would have done so to no purpose so long as it was itself the arch-kindler of anger and hatred and the arch-fomenter of strife. But its misguided zeal carried it even further than this. To give its pupils their choice between learning the lessons that it set them and dying a cruel death was bad enough. It was still worse to do what the Church has always done and still does, to give them their choice between obedience, which was to be rewarded by an eternity of bliss in a quasi-material Heaven, and disobedience, which was to be punished by an eternity of torture in a quasi-material Hell. In its alternation between bribery and terrorism, each on an infinite scale, the Church has carried to its last term the conventional teacher's base appeal to selfishness and fear.

For, alas! it was his own individual salvation which the docile pupil was to aim at, and his own individual perdition which he was at all costs to avoid. The eschatology of the Church has done

more than give a stimulus to the individualism which has found expression in the cynical saying, "Each for himself, and the Devil take the hindmost." It has raised this anti-human sentiment to an infinite power. The believer, who has been drugged with the bribes and terrorized with the threats which the Church dispenses so freely, is well content that the greater part of mankind should perish everlastingly so long as he, for one, can contrive to be "saved." Can self-seeking go further than this? To preach "Christ crucified" to men who have been encouraged to take this view of life is worse than a waste of labour: it is a mockery and a fraud. In the atmosphere of selfish desire and selfish fear the ideal of disinterested devotion, of self-sacrifice on the altar of love, can no more live than a flame can burn in a highly polluted air. As a form of words the ideal may continue to exist. As an ideal it must needs falter and flicker and die.

It was through ignorance of the true inwardness of education that the German State embarked on the hopeless experiment of making the nation patriotic by drilling patriotism into the young. And it is to ignorance of the true inwardness of education that we owe the failure—vast and tragic and seemingly almost irreparable—of the Christian Church to propagate the Christ ideal among the peoples of Christendom. Both experiments have been essays in what I have called "compulsory idealism"; and compulsory idealism is a contradiction in terms. To enforce a spiritual ideal is to rob it of its spontaneity. And its spontaneity is its life,

CHAPTER IV

THE SEED-BED OF IDEALISM

WE must abandon as impracticable the dream of transforming the world by drilling a spiritual ideal into the hearts of the young. If the history of modern Germany and the history of Christendom in all ages have taught us no other lesson, they have at least taught us this. Does it follow that we are to abandon our dream of transforming the world through the agency of education? By no means. But before we can hope to realize this dream we must transform our theories of education, we must renounce our faith in Prussian methods and find some other way of approach to the heart of the child.

The author of *The Science of Power* has criticized with just severity the fatalism of the Mendelian sociology, as expounded by Dr. Bateson and others—a sociology whose central aim is the establishment of a system of hereditary caste, which is to control and regulate a general scramble for the possession of property. And he has done well to oppose to the “inborn heredity,” which in the eyes of the biological fatalist is all in all, the collective or social heredity which acts through the medium of environment and education (in the widest sense of the latter word), and which, as one of our most eminent biologists¹ contends, is “completely free

¹ Sir Edwin Ray Lankester.

from the limits of protoplasmic continuity," and "grows and develops by laws other than those affecting the perishable bodies of successive generations of mankind."

But our author allows his faith in the transforming influence of social heredity to carry him too far. We can perhaps go with him when he tells us that "there is not an existing institution in the world of civilized humanity which cannot be profoundly modified or altered, . . . in a generation." But when he goes on to say that "there is no ideal in conformity with the principles of civilization dreamed of by any dreamer or idealist which cannot be realized within the lifetime of those around him," I, for one, must protest, in the sacred name of idealism, against an excess of optimism which is as dangerous as it is fallacious. An ideal which could be realized within the lifetime of even the most long-lived of human beings is no ideal: it is at best a finite end of action, desirable perhaps, but at best only partially and provisionally valid. The quest of an ideal ought to transform itself, sooner or later, into the quest of *the* ideal, the Supreme Ideal, the Ideal of all ideals. In other words, it is or ought to be an adventure into the infinite; and such an adventure must needs carry one far beyond the limits of any lifetime.

It is when we examine the assumption on which Kidd has based his exuberant optimism, that we realize how unsound are its foundations. He has taken for granted that "the mind of the child is like a blank page upon which good or evil training produces indelible results"; and he apparently

infers from this that if a spiritual ideal could be duly inscribed upon each of the "blank pages" of the rising generation, the world would be completely transformed and transfigured within a comparatively brief space of years.

The "blank page" theory of the Epigenesists (as I believe they call themselves) is in its way as great a heresy as is its "mighty opposite," the "speck of protoplasm" theory of the Mendelians. The child is not a blank page waiting to be written on at the will and direction of his parents and teachers, but a living organism, with potentialities waiting to unfold themselves and powers waiting to be evoked; and if he is profoundly affected and (as it seems) easily moulded by his surroundings, the reason is that, as a living organism, he readily re-acts to the stimulus of their influence. Without this re-active power, which makes co-operation on his part possible, their influence would be as ineffective as the influence of soil and atmosphere on an infertile seed.

And the "blank page" heresy is, as it happens, scarcely less fatalistic than its rival, the difference between the two being that in the Mendelian theory the Fates are the mysterious physical forces that through a long sequence of generations have fashioned the "speck of protoplasm" which in due season will develop into the child and the man, whereas in the Epigenesist theory Fate is always embodied in the passing generation, which writes its runes on the blank page of the rising generation, having itself once been such a blank page, and so written on, though how from that state of pure passivity it awoke to the creative activity

of an imperious Fate, is a problem which the Epigenesists have never solved.

Our author tells us that the blank page theory is "a root conception of Christian ethics." He has also told us that it is a root conception of German statecraft. That being so, the complete failure of both the Christian and the German experiments in education is proof positive of its inherent unsoundness. For if an experiment which has been conducted on a large scale breaks down after an exhaustive trial, one may surely argue from its failure to the unsoundness of the conception by which it was inspired and controlled.

I do not wish to underestimate the influence of the adult and the old on the young. For good or for evil that influence is undoubtedly very great. But it is by example rather than by precept, it is by providing an environment rather than by giving formal instruction, it is by fostering growth in this or that direction, and repressing growth in other directions, rather than by writing runes on the blank page of the mind, that the passing generation stamps itself upon the rising. Children are notoriously imitative and adaptable, and they therefore readily respond to the pressure of their environment, and readily conform to the example set them by their elders. Hence the futility of doing what the Christian Church and the German State have systematically done—of teaching a high ideal "as an ordinary school lesson." For unless the high ideal dominates the environment into which the child is born (which it too seldom does), unless it is practised by his elders (which it too seldom is), the child will have no vital inter-

course with it. He may indeed listen to and learn by heart the instruction on the beauty of the ideal and the duty of practising it, which he receives from his parents and teachers; but so far as the influence of the ideal on his own life is concerned the words of his parents and teachers will have gone in at one ear and out at the other. It is to the tendency of teachers in all ages to think more of instruction than of environment and example, and to the counter-tendency of the young in all ages to ignore mere instruction and to react to the stimulus of environment and example, and of these only, that we owe the complaint of the Prophet, speaking in the name of the Most High,—a complaint which finds its echo in every age: “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”

Here, then, we have a second reason for the failure of the Christian Church to evangelize Christendom, a reason which is, in some sort, a corollary to the first. The Church, as we have seen, has tried to teach the ideal of self-sacrifice by methods which were in keeping with its own dogmatic and dictatorial attitude, but which were wholly unworthy of the ideal presented, and which have therefore de-idealized it in the very act of presenting it for acceptance. The consequence of this has been that Christendom, as a whole, has never been transformed or even deeply moved by the ideal of self-sacrifice, and has therefore never risen appreciably above the low level of morality which prevailed in the West when Christianity was adopted as the State religion

by Imperial Rome. And the further consequence of this has been that each generation in turn, during the past 1500 years, has set a bad example to its immediate successor, an example which has counteracted whatever influence for good the Christian ideal, as presented by the Church, might have been expected to exert.

The bright examples of heroism and disinterested devotion in which history abounds have indeed appealed to the "emotion of the ideal" which Kidd, in defiance of his own blank-page theory, regards as instinctive in the heart of the child. But their influence for good has been persistently thwarted and in many cases wholly counteracted by the spectacle of competitive selfishness, both individual and collective, of greed for possessions, of lust for dominion, of anger and violence, of sexual immorality, of practical atheism, in fine, hiding itself behind the profession of Christianity,—with which their experiences during the critical years of adolescence can scarcely fail to have familiarized the young.

How is the ideal of self-sacrifice to make head-way in the world? If it is not to be inscribed on the blank page of the child's mind, it must, I presume, be evoked in his heart. But is it there waiting to be evoked? Before we consider this question let us clear the way for it by asking another: Is there any remedy for our moral and social disorders which can take the place of the ideal of self-sacrifice?

I read in *The Science of Power* that in the year 1912, Dr. Bateson, the eminent Mendelian, gave a public lecture at Oxford on *Biological Fact and*

the Structure of Society, in which he proved to his own satisfaction that competitive selfishness was the only sound and durable basis of man's social life; his argument being that "the desire to accumulate property in the competitive struggle" is the "only instinct which is sufficiently universal to supply the motive for exertion in civilization." In the course of his lecture he admitted that the altruistic instincts, which are directly opposed to the acquisitive, are strongly developed in some persons, but he went on to say that "they are permanent in very few individuals. They are apt to weaken after adolescence, and to disappear as middle age supervenes."

Did Bateson ever ask himself why the altruistic instincts are apt to weaken after adolescence and to die out in middle life? The capacity for self-sacrifice, for disinterested devotion, must have been present in embryo in the "speck of protoplasm" out of which, according to Bateson, the altruistic child was evolved. Why, then, was it allowed to die out? Bateson would surely admit that a world which was dominated by the spirit of disinterested devotion would be better and happier than one in which the paramount motive to exertion was the lust for possessions, and in which, under the pressure of that sinister motive, man's social life degenerated (as we know from experience that it would degenerate) into a wild orgy of selfish desires and angry passions. It is true that, as an ardent Mendelian, he regards "nature" (heredity) as far more important than "nurture" (environment and education); but he would admit, or rather insist, that if "nature"

is to have fair play "nurture" is imperatively needed, and can never be dispensed with. In the plant world, which he knows so well and from which he draws most of his analogies, nurture counts for a great deal. The best of seeds, if its cultivation were neglected or unskilfully handled, would either perish untimely or grow up a stunted and misshapen plant.

Is it not the same with the human seed, the "speck of protoplasm"? If there are beneficent tendencies present in embryo in each of these, or at least in a goodly percentage of them, ought not those tendencies to be sedulously cultivated, in the interest of the future well-being of the rising generation and of the social world in which that generation will play its part?

It is not, I take it, because he exalts selfishness above self-sacrifice, that Bateson would make the former rather than the latter the basis of our social life, but because the selfish instincts—the competitive and the acquisitive—seem to be almost universal, whereas the altruistic instincts tend to die out. Bateson has never asked himself why the altruistic instincts tend to die out. Nor has he asked himself why the selfish instincts propagate themselves with such fatal facility. The two questions are really one, and the answer to them is not far to seek. Owing to the failure of our unscientific and unskilful "nurture" to foster the growth of the altruistic instincts, the desire to "make money," to go for the "main chance" (as people call it), does in point of fact dominate the social environment into which the child (in each successive generation) is born, and so exerts a pressure on him

which, with his altruistic instincts atrophied by neglect, he is at last powerless to resist.

The fatalism which is inherent in the Mendelian philosophy seems to have infected its advocates and exponents. They accept with complacent indifference the gradual disappearance of the higher instinct, or group of instincts, and the growing ascendancy of the lower; and they make no attempt to find either a reason or a remedy for this degenerative process. Yet the attempt is worth making. The scheme of social reform for which Bateson pleads is not even a *δεύτερος πλοῦς*, a second-best course. It is a counsel of despair. The acquisitive instinct, merging itself in the competitive, has turned the social life of Christendom in all ages, and most noticeably in our own age and its immediate predecessors, into a feverish scramble for possessions and pleasures, and it led at last to the appalling catastrophe of the late war, the aftermath of which we are still reaping in the form of social and political turmoil and widespread and many-sided demoralization. But if competitive selfishness is to be, as Bateson proposes, the recognized basis of our social life, the normal state of human society will in future be one of open warfare. Consider what this means. With the great and ever-growing mastery of the means of destruction which we owe to scientific research, the warfare of the future will be so murderous and so ruinous that the late war, with all its horrors, will prove to have been mere child's play as compared with it. Slaughter on a stupendous scale, accompanied by the wholesale destruction of property, will sweep away the peoples of the world—non-combatants

as well as combatants—in tens of millions; and famine and disease, following in the wake of high explosives and poison gases, will carry on and complete their deadly work. What Bateson is really advocating is the suicide of the human race.

Nor would the system of hereditary caste which he proposes to establish do anything to avert that final catastrophe. On the contrary, it would accelerate its advent, by providing a further incentive to strife. It is a mistake to suppose that the lower classes would cheerfully accept their quasi-official exclusion from the higher. Far from doing this, they would strive with redoubled energy to acquire property, both for its own sake, and because by its help they might hope to climb to the higher social levels from which the professors of Eugenics had in their wisdom excluded them. Indeed, for hundreds of years the desire to rise in the social scale has been one of the chief reasons why men have striven, by fair means or foul, to make themselves rich; and if society were reconstructed on a Mendelian basis, the desire to rise in the scale, “to get on in the world,” would become stronger than it had ever been, and would thus add fresh fuel to the fire of greed and jealousy which has already heated to boiling point our witch’s cauldron of passion and unrest.

I have dealt at some length with Bateson’s proposals for the reconstruction of society, partly because they prove that there is no alternative for the ideals of self-sacrifice, as a remedy for our disorders, except the insanely paradoxical scheme (the mere statement of which is its *reductio ad*

absurdum) of making competitive selfishness—the very *fons et origo mali*—the recognized basis of our social life;—partly for this reason, and partly because, in the course of the arguments by which the scheme is supported, reluctant witness is borne to the fact that the altruistic instinct, the spirit of self-sacrifice, is a vital part of our human heritage.

Here Bateson and Kidd meet on common ground. But how hard it is for those who deal in paradoxes to be consistent! When Bateson tells us that the spirit of self-sacrifice with which “nature” has endowed the young weakens after adolescence and dies out in middle life, he bears witness, perhaps without intending to do so, to the transforming influence—in this case a destructive influence—of “nurture” (environment), and tacitly abandons his belief in the “overwhelmingly superior significance of nature.” And when Kidd insists, with his wonted ardour, on the innate altruism of the young, on their natural capacity for self-sacrifice, and their readiness to respond to the appeal of a high ideal, he tacitly abandons the blank-page theory of education on which he bases his oversanguine belief in the transforming influence of nurture,—a belief which has led him to promise us, if we will but commit our children to his care, a new world, a world re-planned, re-founded and re-built, within the lifetime of our own generation.

But this is by the way. What it most concerns us to notice is that these two writers, who are diametrically opposed to one another in their general outlook on life, agree in holding that the altruistic spirit is instinctive in the young, whatever may be its fate in after life. Let us make this

admission our starting point in an enterprise on which I for one feel called upon to embark. For I can neither acquiesce, with Bateson's fatalistic apathy, in the early disappearance of the altruistic instinct; nor can I believe, with Kidd's too facile optimism, in the early regeneration of the world through the compulsory teaching of altruism, by quasi-Prussian methods, to the young of all ages.

Between these extremes there is surely a middle way. Let us try to find it.

CHAPTER V

THE CULT OF SPONTANEITY

LET us try to find a middle way between the respective extremes of the "nature" and the "nurture" schools of pædagogy. But has not such a way already been found? Has not Horace indicated it in his well-known line—

"Doctrina . . . vim promovet insitam" ?

And have not common sense and experience in all ages said *Amen* to this wise aphorism? We can neither dispense with *vis insita* (nature) nor with *doctrina* (nurture). Each is essential to the other, and there is no feud between them. The *vis insita*, the innate capacity or tendency, must be there waiting to be developed; and it is for *doctrina*, the fostering care of the nurse and the teacher, to develop it. The fertile seed which is the victim of neglect or unskilful culture, will grow amiss, if it grows at all. And no amount of fostering care will set the barren seed a-growing.

The soul of the child is not a blank page waiting for runes to be written on it. Nor is it a lump of clay waiting to be moulded at the will of the potter. It is a complex of potentialities—of capacities and sub-capacities, of tendencies and sub-tendencies—waiting to evolve themselves in response to the stimulus of environment and

education,—in a word, of nurture. And it brought those potentialities with it when it came into the world. If spiritual idealism is, as both Kidd and Bateson assert, instinctive in the child, the germs of it must be present in the human embryo, whatever that may be. Bateson identifies the human embryo with a speck of protoplasm. He has no warrant for doing this. The problem of the origin of the soul is in the highest degree obscure and intricate; and the dogmatic, offhand solution of it does but define the limitations of its propounder. It is possible, to say the least, that until the soul of the future child (having an ancestry of its own which escapes the cognizance of the biologist) has united itself with the speck of protoplasm, the human embryo has not been formed. But this is a matter which I have dealt with elsewhere,¹ and which I must not now turn aside to re-consider. I see that the extravagances of the “nature” school have provoked the counter-extravagances of the “nurture” school; and I must be allowed, without further preface or apology, to steer between the Scylla and the Charybdis of these extremes, by assuming that the altruistic instinct, like every other natural tendency, is present in potency in the human embryo, whenever or however this may have been formed, and that it is for those who are responsible for the upbringing of the child to see that a germinal tendency which is so rich in promise is given fair play.

How is this to be done? One thing is clear at the outset. Spontaneity is of the essence of self-sacrifice. He who serves others under compulsion,

¹ In *The Problem of the Soul*.

whether the source of the compulsion be the tyranny of habit or the will of a master, is no more of an altruist than he who serves others for pay. We must see to it, then, that the element of spontaneity in the spirit of self-sacrifice is duly cared for. This may seem a small matter, but it involves nothing less than a revolution in our attitude towards education. For the conventional methods of education are all dominated by the assumption that the teacher can write what he will on the blank page of the child's mind, that he can mould to his heart's desire the passive clay of the child's character. Whatever else education may do for the child, there is one thing which it has done for hundreds of years and still does in all but a few exceptional homes and schools: it represses spontaneity. The child is to do what he is told to do, to learn what he is told to learn, to say what he is told to say, to think what he is told to think, to believe what he is told to believe, to desire what he is told to desire, to feel what he is told to feel. Initiative, the spirit of enterprise and adventure, is sternly discountenanced. The child is not to follow his own inclinations, to draw upon his own resources, to think for himself, to choose his own objective, to steer his own course. He is to sit still or stand at attention and wait the word of command. He is to receive orders and obey them.

Under the stress of this repressive regime spontaneity as such is systematically discouraged. And spontaneity as such includes the spontaneity which is of the essence of self-sacrifice. We have seen that the German attempt to teach patriotism

and the attempt of the Christian Church to teach "Christ crucified" have been disastrous failures. We can now see that these essays in compulsory idealism miscarried, not only because they attempted the impossible, but also because the whole system of education to which they belonged was and is destructive of spontaneity, and therefore fatal to any natural tendency in which spontaneity is a vital element.

7 Freedom, then, for the child to be himself is one of the first things that we must demand if we are to clear the way for the outgrowth of the spirit of self-sacrifice. This does not mean that in future the teacher is to efface himself and cease to count. On the contrary, it will be open to him to count for more than he has ever done before. The responsibility laid upon him, the demands made upon him, will be greater than they have ever been. But his reward, when he reaps it, will be proportionately great. He will have to give the child as favourable an environment as possible. He will have to set him a good example. He will have to provide him with mental and spiritual food, with the sympathy which is as sunshine to a growing plant, with the stimulus of his own personal magnetism (if he has this to give), with the guidance which age and experience entitle him to offer. He will reserve to himself the right to command and forbid; but he will exercise this right as sparingly as possible. And instead of imposing on the child the mechanical discipline of drill, he will give him opportunities for self-discipline and will encourage him to be a law as well as a light unto himself.

If the teacher is to do all this he must trust the child; he must take his natural goodness—and his natural all-round capacity—for granted. He has hitherto, under the influence of the evil tradition in which his own generation was brought up, taken the natural badness—and the natural incapacity—of the child for granted. Hence these tears. He must now forswear this soul-paralysing superstition. Indeed he has already forsworn it, if, as I am assuming, he believes that the spirit of self-sacrifice is instinctive in the young. For the capacity for self-sacrifice is a sure proof of kinship to God. Thomas Traherne says of his own childhood: "In my pure primitive Virgin Light, when my apprehensions were natural and unmixed, I cannot remember but that I was ten thousand times more prone to good and excellent things than evil." If the teacher will believe that the child is by nature "more prone to good and excellent things than evil," he will be nearer to truth and have a better foundation to build upon than if he thinks of him as having by nature a corrupt heart and a rebellious will. The education which is dominated by the doctrine of original sin is of inner necessity dogmatic, dictatorial, repressive, stern. It is open to it to try to drill a spiritual ideal, such as that of self-sacrifice, into the young, as the Christian Church has vainly tried to do for fifteen centuries. It is not open to it to try to evoke such an ideal. For how can one evoke what does not exist even in germ? If we are to give free play, in any sort or measure, to the child's spontaneous impulses, we must start by assuming that the general tendency of his impulses is towards good.

Chambers

In schools of the conventional type there are three chief incentives to correct behaviour and steady work, all of which are in keeping with the low estimate of human nature on which education has so long been based. The first is the fear of external punishment. The second is the hope of external reward. The third is the desire of the child, under the competitive system which is compulsory in most schools, to outshine his classmates. Fear, greed, and vanity, the last-named having envy and jealousy in close attendance on it—these are the instincts to which the teacher, in his despair of winning the goodwill of his pupils by the intrinsic attractiveness of his scheme of education, is forced to appeal. Could there be a more humiliating confession of failure? So long as those base instincts are deliberately exploited, the spirit of self-sacrifice which is latent in the child will be unable to unfold itself. Its seeds are there, in the dark subsoil of the child's heart, but as fast as they push their shoots to the surface, "the thorns spring up and choke them."

The education that is to liberate the latent idealism of the child must find some better way of commending itself to him. It must be in itself, from first to last, an appeal for willing service. The response that will be made to such an appeal will surprise the teacher. Show a man that you trust him, that you take his honesty and his goodwill for granted, and he will prove himself, in nine cases out of ten, worthy of your trust.¹ Show

¹ Many years ago a friend of mine won the devotion and faithful service of a Spanish brigand by trusting him, first with his purse and then with his revolver.

him that you distrust him, check him and safeguard yourself against him at every turn, and he will be for ever straining at the leash. What is true of the world-hardened heart of the man is still truer of the tender, sensitive heart of the child. If those who are in authority over the child will show him that they have confidence in him, and that they are ready, as it were, to take him into partnership with them, he will cease to be their potential enemy, and will end by going out of his way to give them devoted and unstinted service. What every man and, *a fortiori*, every child likes to feel is that the springs of right action are in himself, that he is walking willingly and even spontaneously in the right way, instead of being driven along it to the crack of a whip. When I was a school inspector the methods employed in most schools were so uncongenial to the children that they were actually expected to misbehave themselves whenever the teacher's back was turned. If the teacher had to leave the school for a minute he would call out one of the children, place him in front of the class, and direct him to play the part of the spy and the informer. What were the feelings of the children for the school in which they were subjected to such an indignity? When the session was over they were marched in military fashion to the door or gate. The next moment "a timely utterance"—a succession of wild war whoops—"gave their souls relief" from the deadly tension and the stifling atmosphere of their school life. These things happened long ago, but I am afraid the war whoops are still to be heard at 12.0 a.m. and 4.0 or 4.30 p.m. They are

an unwelcome sound in my ear, for they tell me that in that school, if in no other, education is doing more harm than good.

When coercive pressure on the child has been withdrawn or at least reduced to a minimum, attractive influence must as far as possible take its place. For attractive influence will be responded to by pressure of the right sort, pressure from within, the pressure on the child's undisciplined emotions of the awakening will power of his higher self. To bring attractive influence to bear on the child is the function of the teacher. There are enthusiasts for the gospel of freedom who carry their new-born zeal so far as to propose, in all seriousness, that the teacher shall retire into the background and leave the child to his own devices. This paradoxical proposal, involving as it does a radical misunderstanding of the meaning and purpose of freedom, is scarcely worthy of serious criticism. One obvious objection to it is that it robs the child of the heritage of the ages which it is the business of those who are responsible for his upbringing to transmit to him. Another objection, less obvious perhaps, but even more weighty, is that it attempts the impossible. The child cannot be left entirely to his own devices. Pressure of some sort, influence of some sort he must be exposed to. To leave him, or try to leave him, to his own devices is to place his undeveloped desires and impulses at the mercy of his own immediate environment—the environment of a criminal slum, for example, or of a too luxurious home. The danger of this is self-evident, and I need not dwell upon it. If tyranny is a bad thing for

children, anarchy, which usually ends by substituting seven tyrants for the one who has been dethroned, is by many degrees worse.

What task, then, will the teacher who believes in freedom set himself at the outset? He will make it his first aim to prepare the way for the willing co-operation of the child in his own education. This will take the form, on the one hand, of releasing him from all pressure which is needless and injurious, which is coercive for the mere sake of coercion; and, on the other hand, of making him feel that he is trusted and believed in, and that his goodwill is taken for granted. The next step will be to provide him, or help him to provide himself, with an attractive programme of school organization and school work—a programme which will so appeal to the child that he will of his own accord go forth to meet it and welcome it. In this movement we shall have a wholesome outflow of the spontaneity which it is the aim of education to encourage. And we shall have more than this. We shall have the first stirring in the heart of the child of disinterested devotion. And disinterested devotion is another name for the spirit of self-sacrifice.

CHAPTER VI

THE CULT OF INDIVIDUALITY

THE scheme of education which is to evoke a spontaneous welcome from the child must make due provision for the cult of his individuality. For by spontaneous action we mean action which is initiated by one's own self; and one's own self is a process, so to speak, between the opposite poles of individuality and universality, the response of the individual to the call of the Universal taking of necessity (so far as it is genuine) a path which is all his own.

When I use the word "individuality," I am treading on dangerous ground—

*"Incedo per ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso."*

The current confusion between individuality and individualism has raised a prejudice in the minds of many persons, especially of those who are reactionary by temperament, against the reform of education in the direction of increased freedom for the child, and has brought the whole gospel of self-realization into disrepute.

For this confusion the advocates of freedom are quite as much to blame as their opponents. Some fifteen or twenty years ago there was a craze for "self-realization" at Oxford, of which one who had himself been infected with it has given us a

graphic description: "In those days the great feature of those who tried to be 'in the forefront of modern thought' was their riotous egotism, their anarchical insistence on the claims of the individual at the expense of law, order, society and convention. 'Self-realization' was considered to be the primary duty of every man and woman. The wife who left her husband and children and home, because of her passion for another man, was a heroine, braving the hypocritical judgment of society to assert the claims of the individual soul. The woman who refused to abandon all for love's sake was not only a coward but a criminal, guilty of the deadly sin of sacrificing her soul, committing it to prison where it would languish and never bloom to its full perfection. The man who was bound to uncongenial drudgery by the chains of an early marriage or aged parents dependent on him, was the victim of a tragedy which drew tears from our eyes. The woman who neglected her home because she needed a 'wider sphere' in which to develop her personality, was a champion of women's rights, a pioneer of enlightenment. And, on the other hand, the people who went on making the best of uncongenial drudgery, or in any way subjected their individualities to what old-fashioned people called the sense of duty, were in our eyes contemptible poltroons. It was the same in politics and religion. To be loyal to a party or a Church was to stand self-confessed a fool and a hypocrite. Self-realization, that was in our eyes the whole duty of man."¹

¹ From *A Student-in-Arms*, by Donald Hankey (who was subsequently killed in battle). I have quoted this passage

Self-realization *is* the whole duty of man. But the cult of individuality is not the whole of self-realization. It is only the first stage in it, a necessary stage, but one which fulfils its function by being transcended and left behind. As for the rampant individualism which the young Oxonians glorified, it is so far from being worthy of the name of self-realization, that it may be said without exaggeration to be the very negation of that vital process.

Let me try to explain how I, for one, distinguish between individuality and individualism. By the individuality of a man I mean the particular lines along which he, being what he is and having the various tendencies and capacities with which nature has endowed him, is predestined to grow. But the essence of growth is self-transcendence; and one may therefore further define individuality as one's own appointed way of escape from self. The individualist is one who makes the cult of individuality an end in itself, and who therefore gets no further than the first stage in the process of self-realization. This is bad enough, but this is not all. In treating the first stage as the only

elsewhere. My excuse for re-quoting it is that it aptly illustrates an unfortunate confusion of thought which is still widely prevalent. It is worthy of note that in their advocacy of individuality the young Oxonians of Hankey's day showed a singular lack of individuality. They did not see that self-realization, as they used the word, was a mere shibboleth, the watchword of a movement which they had taken up—nine-tenths of them—not because it really appealed to them, but because it was "the thing" to take it up. In "their anarchical insistence on the claims of the individual," they were on a par, so far as individuality was concerned, with the individual members of a stampeded herd.

stage he actually reverses the whole process. He claims to be free to assert his individuality, to do whatever seems right in his eyes, without regard to the interests or the well-being of others. In other words he is selfish on principle, openly and avowedly selfish; and selfishness implies bondage to self. Therefore, in advancing his claim to what he miscalls freedom—freedom to assert and indulge his own individual self—he arrests his own development, he imposes on his soul the yoke of the harshest of tyrants and the hardest of task-masters—self.

To realize self is not to assert it and indulge it, as so many individualists and anti-individualists vainly imagine. To realize self is to transcend self and keep on transcending it, till self is finally lost—and finally won. It is the instinct to live which generates and controls the subconscious desire to grow; and it is the subconscious desire to grow, to outgrow self, to transcend self, which impels the child, the future man, towards self-surrender, self-sacrifice, self-loss. But if the child is to live, he must live his own life; and if he is to grow, he must do the business of growing by and for himself. That is why individuality is to be held sacred, and why individualism, which arrests development and so undoes the work that individuality has initiated, is to be condemned.

There are two quarters, then, from which war against individuality is unceasingly waged. The first, which chiefly affects the child and the youthful adolescent, is that of dogmatic direction and disciplinary coercion. The second, which is a reaction against the first and chiefly affects those

who are on the threshold of manhood, is that of rampant individualism. It is with the former that I am now concerned. How is the repression of individuality, which seems to be of the essence of the conventional type of education, to be avoided or counteracted, and the child to be set free (within limits) to be his natural self? Having cleared the way for the consideration of this problem, by exposing and as far as possible correcting the current confusion between individuality and individualism, I will now try to solve it.

The problem is one which presses for solution. For if and so far as individuality is repressed, the instinctive attempt of the individual to escape from self, by outgrowing self, will come under the control of external forces, and will therefore enter the path of mechanical obedience, a broad and easy and seemingly level path, but one which is apt to lose itself at last in the downward path of pretence and make-believe, of hypocrisy and cant.

The function of education is to foster growth. This I have always taken, and shall always take, for granted. To foster growth without giving free play to individuality, is impossible. Growth, whatever form it may assume, must be made by the thing that grows. To grow vicariously, to grow on behalf of others, to do the business of growing for another, is a task which "exceeds man's might." The Chinese have a saying that men are as different as their faces. Recognition of this fundamental truth should be the basis of education. If growth is to be a reality, each individual must be free, as free as is compatible with the maintenance of social order, to grow

along the lines of his own being. If he is to give his best service to others, he must be free to serve them in his own way. If he is to lose himself in the general life of the community, he must be free to make his own special contribution to the common fund. It is unity in diversity, not unity in monotony, which makes of a community an organic whole.

Education has hitherto cared more for the semblance of growth than for the reality. It has aimed at producing ponderable and measurable results, not at quickening the inner life, which, as it unfolds and expresses itself, produces the only results that really count. In schools of the normal type the children are massed in large classes, move up the school shoulder to shoulder, and always work by a rigid time-table. The classes vary in size. In some elementary schools there are as many as fifty or even sixty children in a class. In the high-grade secondary schools the number is, I believe, from twenty to thirty. Taking one school with another, one may say that the average number of children in each class is at least thirty. The education of these children is based on the assumption that they are all of the same type of mind and are all in the same stage of mental development. They are all doing the same work at the same time. A cut-and-dried syllabus is prepared for them at the beginning of each term. No freedom of choice is allowed them. No attempt is made to consult their tastes, their inclinations or their capacities. It is probable that seventy per cent. of them are working against the grain, working under compulsion, working

under the veiled threat of punishment, working to pass a formal examination, working for prizes and marks and places in class. In the great Public Schools the percentage of those who are doing Latin and Greek against the grain is, as a rule, considerably higher than seventy. In the High Schools for Girls the percentage of unwilling workers is lower, for girls take to drudgery¹ more readily than boys; but even in girls' schools the percentage of workers who are both willing and interested is very small.

Why are so many of the children in each class working at any given moment against the grain? Partly because they have no aptitude for the given subject, which is presumably being taught *as a subject*. Partly, and indeed chiefly, because the subject, whatever it may be, is being dogmatically and dictatorially taught. The teacher's assumption that he knows what subjects are suitable for his pupils, all and each, leads on to the further assumption that he knows exactly how the various subjects are to be taught to his pupils, all and each. Both assumptions are fallacious. If the teacher had a real insight into the respective minds and temperaments and characters of his pupils, he would know that (so long as educationists continue to think in subjects) some measure of freedom in the choice of subjects ought to be given to them, and that rigid uniformity in the methods of instruction is even more to be deprecated than rigid uniformity in the curriculum, different methods of approach to this

¹ By drudgery I mean work which is both compulsory and distasteful.

or that subject being needed for different temperaments and different minds. As it is, the teacher is content, in nine schools out of ten, or perhaps in ninety-nine out of a hundred, to pump information into the minds of his pupils, in happy indifference as to whether the information which is so imparted is or is not assimilated by the victims of his "forcible feeding." The idea of taking his pupils into partnership with him, of appealing for their willing co-operation, of finding out what subjects are most likely to interest them (and so stimulate their mental growth) and how they may best be interested in whatever subjects are selected, is one which is foreign to his way of thinking about education, and foreign (one might almost say) to his whole outlook on life.

When a child is working against the grain the chances are that his individuality is being unduly repressed. There was a time when, under the influence of the doctrine of Original Sin, men seriously believed that the repression of his wayward individuality, the being compelled to work against the grain of his corrupt nature, was the way of salvation for the child. (If his natural instincts and impulses were evil, what better fate could befall him than to be forced to do work against which his natural instincts and impulses rebelled?) Since then two things have happened. The doctrine of Original Sin has gradually retired into the background, and the new science of psycho-analysis has gradually come to the front. Men no longer believe, as did the stern father in *The Way of all Flesh*, that to keep on lisping when he is told to speak clearly, is a proof of

perversity in a little child, and that the only way to deal with such rebelliousness is to whip the devil out of the youthful rebel. And men are beginning to realize that natural tendencies are not eradicated by being repressed, that on the contrary they take refuge from repression in some mysterious region of the child's subconscious life, where, owing to their normal development having been thwarted, they secrete a subtle poison which may at last imperil the mental and moral well-being of the adolescent or the man. The result of this dual movement is that, in theory at least, the repression of individuality is no longer regarded as a vital element in a sound education.

But in practice individuality is still systematically repressed. The explanation of this is simple. Institutions outlive the ideas that they embody. A system of any kind which has long been dominated by a particular conception will retain the form and the structure which it owes to that conception long after the conception itself has fallen into disrepute; and when the time comes for the conception to be modified, its structure will be slower to change than its form. Hence it is, to take a pertinent example, that though to-day we are all democrats in theory and our political institutions are more or less democratic in form, the structure of society is still largely feudal.¹ And hence it is, to return to education, that though the cult of individuality is now advocated in many quarters and the rigid repression

¹ Or rather, it was feudal before the war. Since the war the melting-pot has been at work, and there is no saying what will ultimately emerge from it.

of it is condemned by all thoughtful educationists, neither the form nor the structure of our educational system has yet been materially modified, the government of the average school being still autocratic and irresponsible (so far as the governed are concerned), while there are few schools in which the fixed class and the fixed time-table do not co-operate to force the pupils into one rigid mould. But the change in opinion which has been at work for some years has not been wholly inoperative. There are schools of all grades in which experiments in self-government and self-education are being openly made. Teachers are more adventurous and less conventional than they used to be. A new leaven is at work; and the more sanguine among us believe that a day will surely come, however distant it may be, when the "whole lump," the whole system of education, will have been transformed by this ever-expanding ferment.

The chief hindrance to the coming of that day is the vicious circle in which we have long been and are still entangled. The teachers of to-day were the pupils of yesterday; and, as pupils, they were unceasingly exposed to the malign influence of the repressive system which was then orthodox in theory besides being universally practised. Their own individualities were sternly and systematically repressed, first in the schools which they attended and then in the colleges in which they were trained for their profession. Can we expect them to have that spirit of adventure, without which great changes cannot be initiated? Fortunately there are exceptions to every rule. In all

walks of life, in art, in letters, in religion, in science, in industry, there have always been men and women whose individualities were so vigorous and ebullient that no amount of pressure could really repress them—men and women who were sure, sooner or later, to break whatever fetters tradition, convention and custom might have fastened upon them. Some of these pathfinders have found their way into the teaching profession. If their number is as yet small, we must remember that the more adventurous spirits in school and college have tended to regard the teacher as their hereditary enemy, and, therefore, as the last person in whose footsteps they would wish to tread. As the influence of these reformers makes itself felt, and education becomes less repressive and reverence for individuality gains ground, the pioneering spirit will gradually spread among the pupils and ex-pupils of our educational institutions, and the proportion of youthful pioneers who will be attracted by the teaching profession will become gradually larger. A new class of teachers will thus come into being. And at last, in some far-off future, it will, perhaps, be realized that there is no profession in which the openings for pioneering work are so great as in that of the teacher, and no profession in which the pioneer can do so much for his fellow-men.

It would be beside my purpose to describe in detail the various experiments which have been made or are being made in the direction of releasing the child from injurious constraint and giving his individuality the free play that it imperatively needs. So far as they have been

successful those experiments have had certain features in common. If we would know what these features are, let us examine the educational system of one of the greatest of living educationists. The work of Dr. Maria Montessori is familiar to all who are in any degree interested in the reform of education. Her fame is well-merited, for she may be said to have laid the foundations of reform by showing us when and how to begin. Before her time it was generally taken for granted, as it still is in many quarters, that the young child is the most helpless of beings and must be educated accordingly. In point of fact, the child who is emerging from babyhood has just completed a remarkable and highly successful experiment in education, in the course of which, with little or no help from his parents (who have fortunately been debarred from interfering with him by his ignorance of their language), he has exercised his various nerves and muscles with untiring energy, and taught himself to use his limbs and his senses, and at last to walk and to talk. Having done all this for himself, he is treated by his nurse and parents, as soon as they are able to make themselves understood by him, as a being so feeble and helpless that his hand must be held at every turn, that his every movement must be directed, that he must do nothing by or for himself, that his strength is to sit still and wait the word of command. It has also been taken for granted that he has no will of his own,¹ except in the direction

¹ Dr. Temple, Bishop of Manchester, and ex-Head Master of Repton, in a presidential address to the Teachers' Guild, told his audience that "a new-born child has practically

of disobedience and mischief, and that his mouth must be held with bit and bridle, partly for guidance and partly for restraint. There was a time when there was a "Babies" class in every large Infant School. The room in which that class was taught was a prison, in which every natural impulse was thwarted and every natural instinct was starved, and in which a suitable foundation was thus laid for the deadening, devitalizing education which the Babies, as they passed through the various stages of childhood, were destined to receive.

Here Dr. Montessori came to the rescue. This remarkable woman, whom nature had endowed with imaginative sympathy and sound judgment, and who has added to these gifts the knowledge and experience of a trained psycho-physiologist, has realized, as no one had done before, that the one aim and purpose of the child in his pre-education days is to educate himself. Having watched the doings of a small boy in the Pincian Gardens who had been trying to fill a pail with gravel, and whose nurse had outraged his feelings by filling the pail for him and carrying him off in his baby carriage, Dr. Montessori expressed her sympathy

no will," and that "the elementary stages of education consist in creating will, the faculty of attention, which is of the essence of will." This is a fair sample of the erroneous psychology—the outcome of profound ignorance of child nature, especially in its earlier stages—on which education of the repressive type is based. If Dr. Temple had ever studied the ways and works of an infant during the first year or two of its life, he would have realized that, far from having "no will," "the new-born child" is brimming over with will-power, and that its main purpose, in exercising its will, is to educate itself.

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with him and her understanding of his trouble in the following words: "What an accumulation of wrongs weighed down that nascent intelligence! The little boy did not wish to have the pail full of gravel; he wanted to go through the motions necessary to fill it, thus satisfying a need of his vigorous organism; . . . he wished to co-ordinate his voluntary actions; to exercise his muscles by lifting; to train his eye to estimate distances; to exercise his intelligence in the reasoning connected with his undertaking; to stimulate his will by deciding his own actions. . . . His unconscious aim was his own self-development; not the external fact of a pail full of little stones. The vivid attractions of the external world were only empty apparitions; the need of his life was a reality. As a matter of fact, if he had filled his pail he would probably have emptied it out again in order to keep on filling it up until his inner self was satisfied." In this passage Dr. Montessori has set forth the first principles of the philosophy of education, and indicated the path which reform will have to follow. The various experiments that have been made in the direction of increased freedom for the child have all been true, in greater or less degree, to the spirit of this protest. The pioneers have taken the goodwill and capacity of the child for granted and have made it their business to co-operate with him in the work of self-education.¹ And these are the lines on which

¹ One of the most successful of these pioneers is Professor Cizek, the Viennese Art Master, the work of whose pupils—children of from six to fourteen years of age—has recently been exhibited in London and at other centres and has surprised and delighted all who have seen it. "How do

all such experiments will have to be conducted if they are to achieve any measure of success. Dr. Montessori has shown us how to give freedom to children of the very tenderest years. For this we owe her a debt of gratitude which we shall best discharge by remaining consistently loyal to the spirit of faith in child nature which has inspired and guided her in all her experimental work.

But faith in child nature is only the first stage in the cult of the child's individuality. The next stage is the practical one of giving him freedom. This may seem a simple matter. In point of fact it is beset with difficulties. But here again we shall do well to learn of Dr. Montessori. To turn a child loose and tell him to go his own way is, as she has seen, no solution of our problem. It is because she has given the "infant" a favourable environment, by supplying him with a suitable "didactic material," and in other ways, that she has been able to give him a generous measure of freedom. The pioneers in educational reform will do well to follow her lead. If the teacher of older children would give his pupils the freedom that they need for self-development, he must previously have given them, and must concurrently give them, as favourable an environment as possible. How is this to be done?

you do it?" asked an interviewer, when she had looked at some hundreds of the productions of the professor's pupils, "each more delightful and original than the last." "But I don't do it," he answered. "I take the lid off and other art masters clap it on. That is the only difference." "The only difference!" Yes, but this only difference is very nearly the whole difference between the right and the wrong method of education.

CHAPTER VII

ENVIRONMENT

WHAT steps is the teacher to take in order to give the child a favourable environment? While the child is still an infant the problem of environment is comparatively simple. Two environments make up his little world—the home and the school. The home is not under the control of the teacher, though, as we shall presently see, when the child is healthily happy in his school life, some measure of influence is transmitted through him from the school to the home.¹ The school is under the control of the teacher, more so than any school for older children, for in the Infant School there is no tradition, built up by the children themselves, to tie the teacher's hands, and apart from the home there is no competing environment. The power of the teacher for good or for evil is therefore very great.

Before the days of Dr. Montessori that power

¹ A good Nursery School in a poor neighbourhood makes its wholesome influence felt in the surrounding homes, the mothers, who have been won over by the spectacle of the well-being and happiness of their children, being ready to learn from the nurses and to follow their example as far as lies in their power. Unfortunately the percentage of children who attend such schools is very small, the bulk of the younger "infants" in this country having either to stay at home or to attend "Infant Schools" of the conventional type.

was almost universally abused.¹ During the first two years or so of his life the child, in spite of his physical helplessness, is to a large extent the controller of his own environment and the director of his own development, carrying on as he does with restless energy, under the guidance of the "Sovereign directress," Nature, the all-important work of educating himself. But when, by his own unaided effort, he has acquired the fatal gift of speech, and so delivered himself into the hands of those who are responsible for his upbringing, his troubles begin. His freedom is not merely abridged. It is taken away from him. His teacher—nurse or mother or schoolmistress, as the case may be—though profoundly ignorant, one may safely conjecture, of the rudiments of psycho-physiology, takes for granted that she knows exactly how he is to be brought up, and that the way of obedience to herself is therefore the way of salvation for him. She has done this for countless generations, and the harvest of her sowing has again and again

¹ Is this statement too sweeping? I do not think so. When I was a school inspector the Froebelian influence was supposed to be at work in many of our Infant Schools; but, so far as my experience went, it had seldom, if ever, effected a *radical* change in the teacher's outlook on education. As often as not the children were kindly, brightly and sympathetically taught. But they were *taught* all the time—even the youngest of them. The teacher was a Providence to them; and they were never left to their own devices or allowed to fend for themselves. I could count on the fingers of one hand the schools in which Froebel's own educational ideal—the realization of "true manhood"—was consciously pursued or even consciously accepted as the ideal end of education. The Montessori influence, on the other hand, whatever else it may have done or left undone, has undoubtedly familiarized many teachers with a new *principle* in education, the principle of freedom for self-expression and self-education.

been a failure. It is now open to her, if she will learn of Dr. Montessori, to retrace her steps and make a fresh start. Dr. Montessori has taught us that the best thing the teacher can do for the child is to help him to carry on the work of self-education from the point where, on the one hand, with the growth of self-consciousness, his instinctive nature has ceased to be quite sure of itself, and its guidance is in consequence neither wholly adequate nor wholly safe,—and, on the other hand, his opening powers are beginning to demand fresh material for their expanding energies. By a miracle of insight she has entered, as it were, into the inner consciousness of the child at this critical stage in his development, divined his intimate needs and given him the kind of environment which will be most congenial to him and most helpful. I do not say that her “didactic material” will never be improved upon. Nor do I say that she has said the last word about the education of infants. But I do say that the teacher who wishes to give young children freedom for self-development will in the main have to build on her foundations. When the material environment of the child is such that whatever activity he may be engaged in is sure to be harmless and nearly sure to be beneficial, then freedom of choice may safely be given to young children of the tenderest years. I look forward, therefore, with hope, if not with confidence, to the gradual diffusion of the Montessori spirit and the Montessori insight into the inner life of the little child, through all the Nursery and Infant schools in this and other countries. This movement will prepare the way for the reform of

education on the higher levels. The teacher of older children, if his pupils have been brought up from their earliest years on Montessori lines, will find that his own educational problems will be by many degrees easier of solution than if he were suddenly called upon to give a large measure of freedom to children whose previous training had unfitted them for the use of such a gift.

And the teacher of older children who takes a practical interest in the reform of education will have need of all the help that the infant teacher can give him. For, as the child grows older, the problem of providing him with a suitable environment becomes continuously more complex and more difficult. Little by little a new factor enters into it. Little by little the child comes under the influence of a third environment—the world. At first the influence of the world is transmitted to him through the medium of the home, and (in a lesser degree) of the school. In a later stage in his development it is transmitted to him through the medium of the press (books and periodicals) and the theatre (the kinema and the play). Lastly, when he reaches the stage of adolescence, he begins “to go out into the world” and enter into its various ways and works. Things being as they are, the influence of the world is in the main for evil, and the problem of counteracting and otherwise controlling it is the most difficult that confronts the teacher.

Let us first consider the relation of the world to the home. The home, with its immediate surroundings, is a little world in itself which is both a fragment and a sample of the great world. It

is also liable to be invaded by that subtle, penetrative atmosphere of the great world, which is called worldliness. There are two chief elements in worldliness,—selfishness and anti-idealism. Selfishness is both individual and collective, and it takes three principal forms, self-indulgence, acquisitiveness, and ambition, the last-named being compounded, in varying proportions, of vanity and love of power. By anti-idealism I mean two things: I mean in the first place the idealization of “respectability,” the subordination of all other motives to regard for current opinion and conformity to convention and custom: and I mean, in the second place, the complacent acceptance of a low moral standard (in the widest sense of the word “moral”) and the cynical discouragement of all attempts to raise that standard. The atmosphere of the world, being subtle and penetrative, is sure to invade the home. How far it will succeed in its invasion will depend on the nature of the home. To some slight extent it will penetrate even the best of homes. When there is a dense fog outside, it will make its presence felt in a house even when the windows are closed against it. But if the windows are thrown open, it will, of course, take possession of the house. It is the same with worldliness and the home.

While the child is still an infant, his ignorance and innocence will shield him from contact with the worldly world. As he grows older he will come more and more under its influence. How is he to be protected against an atmosphere which is on the whole uncompromisingly hostile to the instinctive idealism of his heart? What can the teacher

do to help him in his home life? The home is not under the control of the school, but it is not beyond the reach of its influence. When children are healthily happy in their school life they carry their happiness with them to their homes, where the reflected glow of it may light up the hearts of their parents. When this happens the parents rally round the school, which thus becomes a centre of wholesome influence for the whole locality.¹ I have known this happen more than once, and there is no reason why it should not be the rule rather than the very rare exception. When teachers have solved the problem of making their pupils happy—which they will not be able to do till they have released them from injurious constraint—the school will overflow into the home and provide it with an effective antidote to the poison in the atmosphere of the world. But, in any case, it is in the school that the teacher must help the child to fight the great battle of his life, the battle against worldliness. How is this to be done?

There are two things at least which the teacher can do for his pupils. He can help them to build up a social world of their own inside the school, which will shelter them, largely if not wholly, from the demoralizing influence of the world. And he can control the entry of the world into the school through the channel of the press. The children must build up their own social world. The teacher, however influential and benevolent he may be,

¹ Such a centre was the school which I described in *What Is and What Might Be*. As a vivifying force, as a diffuser of "sweetness and light," it played in its village the part which the parish church may perhaps have played in the Middle Ages, but which few churches play now.

cannot do this for them. But they cannot begin to build their world until he has given them some measure of freedom. When he has given them freedom, and when the gift of it has begun to tell upon their characters and to affect their outlook on life, then the social instinct will begin to assert itself, and the social world—in which, as we shall see, the teacher himself may be and ought to be the central figure—will begin to be built. Thenceforth the two processes, the giving of freedom and the socialization of the life of the school, will act and react on one another continuously. When children are energizing freely and naturally and along the lines which are most congenial to them, a sense of well-being will possess them, which will be realized by them as happiness. And in a community of happy children the instinctive desire to share happiness with others will generate the spirit of comradeship, which will arise spontaneously and infect all the members of the little social world. This is a matter on which I shall have more to say. Meanwhile I will point out that a community which is animated by the spirit of comradeship, itself the natural product of an overflow of unselfish happiness, will automatically shield its members from the contaminating influence of the world. In the pure atmosphere of such a community the germs of selfishness and cynicism will not easily find harbourage, and the “emotion of the ideal,” the spirit of self-sacrifice, of altruism, of disinterested devotion, will grow apace.

The world enters the school through the medium of books and periodicals, more especially the former. Here the teacher can meet it as it enters,

and disinfect its germ-laden atmosphere. And, as it happens, the disinfectant, the antidote to its poison, will be provided, in part at least, by the world itself. For it is not only the world as it is that enters the school through the channel of history and literature. It is also, and more especially, the world as it has been. And it is not only the worldliness of the world that comes in through that channel. It is also the heroism of the world, the self-sacrifice, the spiritual idealism, the high endeavour. Both the poison and the antidote are under the full control of the teacher. And nothing can be easier than for him to misuse his power. Nothing can be easier, for example, than for him to exclude from the school all the books and periodicals of which he happens to disapprove. And nothing can be more futile. In this, as in other matters, the child must be given freedom of choice. Not unlimited freedom. For there are books and other "printed papers" which ought not to be placed in the child's hands till he has entered adolescence or even attained to manhood. But a large measure of freedom. For if the teacher insists on directing his reading for him, he will give him no opportunity for developing either his moral or his æsthetic taste. And he will do worse than this. He will pervert and debase his taste. For in his anxiety to shield the child from every contaminating influence, he will probably limit him, in his recreative reading, to books of the Sunday School prize type, goody-goody, wishy-washy books, in which the outlook on life is narrow, conventional and reactionary, the religion a blend of prejudice, formalism and sentimentalism, the

morals timid and commonplace, while the artistry is on a par with the general tenor and tone.

This is not the way to make the school library a counterpoise to the demoralizing influence of the world. In a well-tended and well-nourished pasture the finer grasses will make such vigorous growth that they will gradually kill out the coarser grasses and weeds. In like manner the taste for what is good in history and poetry and fiction, if it is liberally ministered to, will overpower, by the vigour of its growth, the taste for what is "cheap" and vulgar and unwholesome. Let the teacher see to it, then, that the library contains a variety of books and that a fair proportion of them contain matter which is worth reading and have real literary merit. Let him turn the child loose among these and see what he makes of them, giving him some measure of guidance in the form of hints and suggestions (to which he will be only too ready to respond), but never obtruding this upon him. Let the "heroisms of the past"¹ in history, let the love of nature in poetry, let the joy in brave deeds and high adventures in fiction make their own appeal to the child. These will be a sure prophylactic against the selfishness and cynicism which, as we have seen, are the chief elements in the worldliness of the world. Let the child learn for himself to distinguish good from evil, beauty from ugliness,

¹ The present has its heroisms, as well as the past. But the heroisms of the past are, on the whole, more arresting and stimulating than those of the present,—chiefly, I think, because in the telling of them it has been found necessary to clear away the clogging mass of unessential details which is so apt to confuse and distract the observer of contemporary events.

nobility from baseness, self-sacrifice from self-seeking,—to distinguish between these, and in each case to make his choice between them.

I am told that the literature provided for adolescents is of such poor quality that too often they have to make their choice between twaddle and garbage. If our young people had been inoculated in the day school with a love of good literature, their demand for reading matter, when they reached the stage of adolescence, would have had to be met by something better than this. To exclude twaddle from the day school is scarcely possible, and is perhaps undesirable; for in the first place tastes differ in literature as in other matters, and there is no fixed standard of literary merit; and in the second place, if children are to turn away from twaddle they must do so, as has just been suggested, of their own accord,—they must do so, not because the twaddle has been labelled as such, but because their experience of a better type of literature has made them dissatisfied with what is merely goody-goody,—with what is well-meaning perhaps, but also thin and poor and weak. But neither in childhood nor in adolescence ought the young to be tempted to feed on garbage. It is probable that the choice of books for adolescents is to a large extent beyond the control of those who are interesting themselves in “continued education.” But the matter is really in the hands of the teacher of the day school; for if garbage is excluded from his library and if the taste for good literature is allowed to evolve itself, the taste for garbage will never be formed.

The world also enters the life of the child, if not

of the school, through the medium of the stage,—the theatre and the picture-palace. The former he visits very seldom, the latter very often. The quality of the “pictures” which the child sees varies as much as that of the books which he reads. Much twaddle is presented to him, and far too much garbage. The proportion of pictures that really edify is very small. Yet it might be much larger without financial loss to the kinema companies. Those who provide this form of entertainment take for granted that the taste of the public is low. Perhaps it is. But if it is, the kinema itself must divide the blame for this with the school. The school starves and stunts the moral and æsthetic tastes of its pupils, partly by repression, partly by neglect. The kinema corrupts and debases them. Some day or other, when the reform of education has made further progress, men will find that the natural taste of the child (and therefore of the man) is potentially good, that if he is allowed to choose between the two he will prefer wholesome food to garbage. Rightly used, the kinema is a most valuable instrument of education. It can interest and instruct, and incite to heroism and virtue. Misused, it can demoralize, and incite to vice and crime. For the misuse of the kinema the teachers of our schools are not to blame, except indirectly, through their failure to elevate the taste of their pupils. Nor are they to blame for the neglect of the kinema in education, for this is a matter which is beyond their control. It is for the managers of the schools—the Board of Education and the Local Authorities—to see that the kinema is adopted as an instrument of education, that as such it is made

a proper use of for purposes both of instruction and edification, and that a sound taste in "pictures" as well as in books is formed while the child is still at school.

There are other aspects of the problem of environment on which different teachers will hold different views. If freedom is to be given to the child, even in moderate measure, the organization of the school will have to become much looser, freer and more elastic than it has hitherto been. The rigid timetable will have to be abandoned and the rigour of the class system greatly relaxed. These are matters which each teacher must think out for himself, having regard to his own idiosyncrasy and to circumstances which necessarily vary from school to school.

For, after all, the most important element in the environment of the child is the teacher himself. There are teachers who, in their zeal for the liberation of the child, carry self-effacement too far. I know of one, for example—a gallant "soldier in the war of liberation"—who styles himself the "Chief Adviser" to his pupils. No doubt he is and ought to be their chief adviser, but he is or ought to be a great deal more than this. The teacher can no more abrogate his authority than his responsibility; and his responsibility for the health and well-being of his pupils is not lessened in the slightest degree by his transference to them of some measure of control over their own destinies. His pupils will recognize his authority, however much he may try to abrogate it; and whatever influence he may radiate, for good or for evil, will be raised to a high power by their instinctive deference to his posi-

tion. There is no reason why he should continue to play the autocrat; indeed, there is every reason why he should not; but there is no reason why, because he has ceased to play the autocrat, he should abdicate his throne. If he will be content to rule by love instead of by fear, bearing in mind that

love hath readier will than fear,

if he will be content to ride with a loose rein and a watchful hand, without spur or whip, instead of with a tight rein and a bloody spur, he will find that his authority will count for more in the eyes of his pupils than it had ever done, and that he will be more firmly seated than ever on his throne—in their hearts. And as a social life evolves itself in the atmosphere of happy activity which his gift of freedom has generated, it will be open to him to take the children into partnership with him and lead them into the path of self-government. But if he will do this, he will find that he is still the central figure in the little commonwealth, the centre of its life and the symbol of its unity, and that the citizens will rally round him in loving loyalty, ready to anticipate his wishes and give him that willing service which far transcends both in scope and value the strict obedience which, as an autocrat, he may once have exacted.

But there is one thing which he must not fail to do. He must try to make himself worthy of the high position which, in spite of himself, he will continue to hold. Bearing in mind how impressionable and imitative children are, and how ready to follow a lead which they regard as authoritative,

in any sense of that word, he will do his best to set them a good example, an example of gentleness, patience, forbearance, justice, devotion to duty, singleness of heart, self-sacrifice, self-control.

And if he happens to have been endowed with that gift of the gods which men call *charm*, and if to this he has added the further charm of unselfishness, of cheerfulness, of tactful sympathy, of serenity of soul, and if, as the result of this twofold charm, he has some special power of attracting children to himself, of winning their confidence, their affection and even their devotion, let him not shrink from exercising it. It may possibly suggest itself to him that, as children are notoriously impressionable and imitative, his personal ascendancy will encroach unduly on the freedom of his pupils and interfere with the development of their respective individualities. It is well that he should listen to this warning voice, but it is not well that he should try to efface himself at its bidding. Charm can be misused. Selfish, ambitious men and vain, power-loving women habitually misuse it. History and fiction abound in stories of the tragic happenings that have been caused by its misuse. But if the teacher has the singleness of heart with which I am crediting him, his attractive influence, far from encroaching on freedom and thwarting development, will give an immense expansion—the expansion which is wrought by the magic of love—to the range of the child's life. Devotion to another—a parent, a teacher, a lover, a comrade—is one of the channels through which the soul of the All speaks to the heart of each; and he who can, if he will, keep open that channel

has no right to close it. The school which I described in *What Is and What Might Be* was an ideal social community; and it was largely through devotion to "Egeria," first for her own sake and then because she was the centre and symbol of the corporate life of the school, that the children learned the lesson of fellowship with one another, with the result that competition died out of the school and the spirit of co-operation and comradeship reigned in its stead. In that school, if in no other, the problem of giving a favourable environment in preparation for the gift of freedom was successfully solved, and the paradoxical truth that an atmosphere of freedom is an essential element in a favourable environment was fully proved.

CHAPTER VIII

COMRADESHIP

ONE of the wisest teachers whom I have ever met—I will call her Diotīma¹—once said to me: “My first aim is to make my children happy; for I find that when they are happy I can get anything I like out of them.” There is a depth of truth in these words; yet I am not sure that as they stand they do full justice to the speaker’s own philosophy of education, or to her admirable work as a teacher. I think she would have been nearer to the mark had she said: “My first aim is to help my children to become happy; for I find that when they are happy they can get anything they like out of themselves.”

What is fundamental in happiness is the sense of well-being. When children are *steadily*—as opposed to *spasmodically*—happy, we may be sure that all is well with them. But what are the essential elements in well-being? The first and the last element is vigorous and harmonious growth. This is true of all human beings, and indeed of all organisms, but it is of course doubly true of the young. When the child is growing, vigorously and harmoniously, on all the planes of his being,—

¹ Diotīma of Mantinea, who was Socrates’ “instructress in the art of love” (Plato, *Symposium*), was “wise in . . . many . . . kinds of knowledge.”

each plane making the growth, both in kind and degree, which is in keeping with the passing phase in the child's development,—then all is well with him; and because all is well with him, he is happy. Growth is a function of two variables—nutriment and exercise. It is for education to see that both these essentials are liberally provided for,—that the child has a sufficiency of nutritious food, of all kinds, and that he has ample opportunities for exercising his bodily limbs, organs and senses, and—on the higher planes of his being—his various “parts” and “faculties.” In the education which I am advocating such provision is duly made, a favourable environment supplying the child with the food that he needs, while it is the constant aim of the teacher to give him freedom for self-activity, and therefore for self-development through exercise. To provide for the fulfilment of both these conditions taxes the capacity of the teacher to the uttermost. But when they are fulfilled all is well with the children, and their well-being is realized by them as happiness.

And wherever there is genuine happiness, there is sure to be an overflow of happiness into the lives of others. Even when happiness does not rise above the level of “high spirits,” this law holds good. The heart that is warmed by the sense of physical well-being glows with goodwill, which at last seeks an outlet for itself in some act of kindness or hospitality to a neighbour or a friend. And the higher the level of one's *joie de vivre*, the more imperative is the need to share it, and the wider is the circle which the desire to give and receive sympathy embraces. For man is essentially a

social animal; and it is natural, and indeed inevitable, that when there is an overflow of happiness it should take the channel of social life. Hence it is that in a school of happy children the spirit of comradeship, with its call for service and self-sacrifice, springs up of its own accord and gradually dominates the life of the whole community. And hence it is, to go further back and further forward, that the cult of individuality prepares the way for the out-growth of altruism, for the response of the heart to the call of an ever-widening community, till at last the individual finds his highest happiness in what is the very antipole to individualism—devotion to the All.

But it is a long journey to this ideal goal. The author of *The Science of Power* thinks, as we have seen, that for each of us at any given moment the choice lies between devotion to self and devotion to the All; and he infers from this that if only the ideal of self-sacrifice, of devotion to the All, could be drilled into the rising generation as diligently as Germany drilled the ideal of devotion to the Fatherland into her children and adolescents, the problem of social reform would be solved, and the world would be completely regenerated within an easily measurable span of years. But no, the problem of social reform is not so simple or straightforward as this. It is true that in the last resort the choice for each of us does lie between devotion to self and devotion to the All; but if we confound the immediate with the ultimate choice we shall never arrive at the latter. As I have already said, man must serve a long apprenticeship if he is ever to master the art of self-sacrifice, and

he must be allowed to have many lesser loyalties if his supreme loyalty is to be a reality, not a pretence.

There is one stage in social evolution which, as we have seen, Kidd practically ignores—the tribal stage. He realizes that communities, like individuals, can be intensely selfish; but he does not realize that sublime unselfishness on the part of the individual member of the community can co-exist with a high degree of selfishness on the part of the community as a whole. Yet he had only to open his eyes and look around him to see that a community—a nation, a trade-union, a syndicate, a profession, a party—might be uncompromisingly self-centred and self-seeking, and yet be the object of loyal devotion on the part of its members. The characteristic note of “savagery” is not, as Kidd imagined, unbridled individualism. On the contrary, what distinguishes the savage or tribal stage of development from all other stages is that in it individuality, and therefore *a fortiori* individualism, is almost entirely suppressed. Under the tribal regime the community absorbs into itself the moral and spiritual life of each of its members; and the individual, as a personal being, can scarcely be said to have an independent existence. Like the worker bee, the tribesman is so completely dominated by the spirit of the hive that he has practically no choice but to give the community whatever, in the way of service or self-sacrifice, it may ask of him. The idea of withholding what is asked for would never suggest itself to him. But, complete as is his devotion, it has two radical defects: it is too purely instinctive

to be available for any but its own immediate purpose—the well-being of the tribe; and through it, because the spirit of the hive inspires it, the tribesman becomes a partner with the tribe in its collective selfishness as well as in its cruelties, its treacheries, and its piratical exploits. In the tribe individualism is at its minimum, but collective selfishness is at its maximum of intensity. The incorruptible fidelity of the Highland clansmen to their fugitive prince after the '45, was of the very essence of the tribal spirit. So, alas! was the savagery of clan warfare in the Highlands in the days before the '45, days in which the extermination of a tribe, the massacre of all its men, women and children, was by no means a rare incident, and pity for a fallen enemy was unknown.

If the suppression of individuality is the strength of tribalism, it is also its weakness; indeed it has been the chief cause of its decay, and of its impending doom. The individual self must be given free play if the ideal or universal self is ever to evolve itself. The tyranny of the communal self is fatal to both the polar selves,—the individual and the universal; and these must form an alliance for mutual defence if man is ever to realize his high destiny. For voluntary self-surrender is a vital element in that genuine altruism which is the practical side of spiritual idealism; and if self is to be voluntarily surrendered, the individuality of the altruist must play its part in the transaction.

In tribalism the well-being of the tribe has always been regarded as an end in itself. Therefore the devotion of the tribesman has a strain of selfishness in it which has necessitated, and will continue to

necessitate, its ultimate supersession by a larger and purer spirit of self-sacrifice. For, according to the golden rule which I have already formulated, if devotion to a community is to free itself, *for its own sake*, from every taint of selfishness, it must always have at the heart of it devotion to a wider community, till we come at last to the widest of all. The devotion of the tribesman to his tribe has never had this larger devotion at the heart of it, for the narrow horizon of tribal aims and interests has always circumscribed his outlook.

That is why I lay so much stress, in my advocacy of educational reform, on the cult of individuality. Where individuality is duly fostered the spirit of comradeship, being a spontaneous overflow from the wells of happiness, will take precedence in the heart of the child of the spirit of school-patriotism, and when the latter does arise, will take control of it and inspire it with something of its own joyous humanism, of its goodwill to others, not only because they are school-fellows but also because they are fellow human beings. The herd instinct, as such, makes for no goal beyond the well-being of the herd; but the goodwill to others which is generated by the overflow of happiness, having no strain of selfishness in it and no touch of bargaining about it, directs itself towards the Infinite and the Ideal and confers on him whose heart is aglow with it the freedom of the City of God. When a child says to himself, in some secret recess of his soul, "I feel so happy that I must do a kind deed or say a kind word to some one," he has entered the path of disinterested devotion, the path which leads at last to the loftiest heights

of self-sacrifice, of heroism, of aspiration, of all-embracing love.

As the spirit of comradeship spreads through a school, the very atmosphere of the school becomes a stimulant which reacts upon and intensifies the *joie de vivre* of each member of the community. For it is one of Nature's deepest and most mysterious laws that the wells of spiritual vitality are fed by their outflow even more than by their intake. The more freely we share our happiness with others, the more freely do we renew our secret stores of happiness, and the purer and more unselfish does our happiness become. And as in my ideal school healthy and many-sided activity is the source of the well-being which is realized by the children as happiness, any influence which may react upon and intensify their happiness will give a further stimulus to their healthy and many-sided activity. No other stimulus will be needed. The threat of punishment—the threat to spur a willing horse—will be as much out of place as the offer of rewards. Merit marks, places in class, prizes at the end of term, and all other such incentives to good work and good conduct will automatically tend to disappear. When children are happy, with the healthy happiness of "unimpeded energy," work becomes its own reward; and no other reward is asked for and no other motive to exertion counts.

In such an atmosphere the spirit of competition cannot live; and the appeal of the teacher to the competitive instinct—the appeal to vanity, jealousy and selfish ambition—if it were ever made, would prove as futile as it is base. From comradeship to co-operation—the antipole to competition—

is less than a single step. I have known schools in which the proposal to place the children in a class in "order of merit" would have been strongly resented, not by the more backward members of the class, but by those who, if there had been an order of merit, would have been at or near the top. Those were schools in which the leaven of freedom had long been at work. For what is most excellent in freedom is that it is ever preparing the way for a further extension of itself. Give a child some measure of freedom, and the use that he will make of it will fit him to receive a fuller measure of it, till at last in the fullness of time he will become a light and a law unto himself.

Yes, a law as well as a light. With the diffusion of the spirit of comradeship, the twin problems of government and discipline begin to solve themselves. The discipline of self-control takes the place of the discipline of drill, the discipline of autocratic direction on the part of the teacher and mechanical obedience on the part of the child. And when goodwill finds its complement in self-control, the problem of government becomes so simple that the teacher can afford to delegate the solution of it, in no small measure, to the children themselves. The need for an elaborate machinery of government, in order to guard against possible delinquencies on the part of the governed, will gradually cease to be felt. But the teacher must take care that a new machinery does not take the place of the old. He must take care that in delegating responsibility to his pupils he does not unwittingly encroach on the freedom which it is his purpose to encourage. I have known teachers who, in their desire to entrust

self-government to their pupils in as full a measure and at as early a date as possible, worked out a complete administrative system for the school, and then stood aside and invited the children to administer it. Such an experiment was bound to fail. The responsibility for devising an administrative system cannot be separated from the responsibility for administering it.

A simple administrative system is all that is needed, for where goodwill and self-control go hand in hand, social and disciplinary problems will solve themselves as they arise, and the multiplication of rules will be unnecessary; and, instead of being imposed on the school, the system must in the main be allowed to evolve itself. I am assuming that the teacher remains at his post, remains where he ought to be and where his pupils, even the most emancipated of them, will expect him to be—at the head of the government and the centre of the administration. He can do this without playing the autocrat or the drill-sergeant. And so long as he does this, and so long as his pupils rally round him (as they will not fail to do), loyal to him and to one another and masters of themselves, the administrative system¹ may safely be left to evolve itself, along its own lines and at its own pace. “Each for all and all for each” will be the motto of the community. And the teacher, being the symbol of the “all,” will be the main channel for transmitting to the “all” the loyal service

¹ I use the word “system” with some hesitation. I know of at least one school in which the children enjoy a large measure of self-government, and in which the administration, though quite effective, is by no means systematic.

of each, and for transmitting to each the fostering care of the "all."

I am not drawing on my imagination when I write in this strain. I am drawing on my experiences in "Egeria's"¹ school, and other schools of that type, and in various Montessori classes,—experiences which have convinced me that free activity on the part of children, when sympathetically fostered and wisely guided by their teacher, must needs generate healthy happiness, and that there is a natural and necessary overflow from the wells of happiness into the channel of comradeship; an overflow so natural and so necessary that I now regard the outgrowth of the spirit of comradeship as the one unfailing proof of health and well-being in a school. Where that spirit is wanting, there is something wrong with the school, however excellent may be the visible and measurable "results" which it produces. Where that spirit is present, the "results" may be poor—there are sure to be good reasons for this—but the school is alive, in the true sense of this word, and all the scholars are partakers of its life.

In the school which I have in my mind the lesson of disinterested devotion is the first and last lesson in the curriculum. The lesson will not appear on the time-table. It will not be dogmatically taught. It will not be drilled into the children. But it will be mastered in the most effective way possible, through the spirit of comradeship transforming itself, by the force of its own inherent expansiveness, into the spirit of disinterested

¹ The school which I described in *What Is and What Might Be*.

devotion, on its way to the ideal goal of unselfish love.

We must learn this lesson in childhood, for if we do not learn it then, the chances are, as I said before, that we shall never learn it. If we do learn it in childhood, the reform of our social life, for which we are all waiting, will cease to be the vain elusive dream which it has long been and still is. For the spirit of disinterested devotion is the true mainspring of our social life; and because it is the true mainspring of our social life it is also, as we shall now see, the heart and soul of religion.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS TRAINING

GROWTH is of the essence of life. "In no respect to grow is to cease to live." Self-transcendence is of the essence of growth. At every stage in the process of growth there is a surrender or transcendence of the actual in favour of the ideal. The readiest way to transcend self is to pass beyond self into the lives of others. The name for this is social service. Social service is a duty and a necessity. But it is not an end in itself. When service is given for the sake of what it will return to the giver, it is tainted in greater or less degree with selfishness, and the transcendence of self is to that extent incomplete. The transcendence of self will never be complete. Self follows us in every effort that we make to escape from it. But it is an ever-widening self that follows us; and it is in this progressive widening of self that those who are in earnest in their endeavour to escape from self reap their reward. He who is trying to escape from self into the life of a community through the medium of social service must be prepared, if the community claims the whole of his service, to pass on beyond it—and to help it to pass on beyond itself—into the life of a larger community. And so on, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

The lesser loyalty must always have a larger loyalty at the heart of it: otherwise it will not be able to fulfil its own function; for the best service that one can render to a community is to help it to realize its own ideal, and in doing so to outgrow its actual self.

It follows that the growth of the soul is an adventure into the infinite, a journey towards the unattainable ideal. Response to the call of the Infinite and the Ideal is what we call religion; and the practical side of religion is disinterested devotion, devotion which is disinterested because its object is the Infinite and the Ideal, or, to use the most comprehensive of all words, the All. Devotion to the All must needs be disinterested, because it asks for no reward but that of being better able to serve the All; and devotion, so far as it is disinterested, is always religious, is always given to the All.

I have high authority for this interpretation of the idea of religion. In the story or parable (I know not which to call it) of the Last Judgment, Christ defined the quintessential element in religion once and for all time. We know what evil fate has befallen that story; how it has been used to bribe and terrorize the believer; to debase and materialize his conception of salvation; to make him think of eternal life as a bare escape from hell-fire; to darken his days with the awful shadow of an approaching doom; to turn what should have been a trumpet call to battle into the despairing cry of *sauve qui peut*. Was there ever such a tragedy? If there are any passages in our own or any other Scripture in which the spirit is

everything and the letter nothing, this is surely one of them. From first to last it is a glorification of unselfish love. For what happens at the Great Assize? Those who have loved and served their fellow-men are saved. Those who have never loved or served their fellow-men are lost. If religion, whether implicit or explicit, is necessary to salvation, then it is certain that the quintessence of religion, as Christ conceived it, is unselfish love.

The word *unselfish* is all-important. The love which Christ had in mind was to be free from every taint of self. The words in which the Divine Judge pronounces judgment make this clear: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The righteous, those who loved and served their fellow-men, did so without any hope of reward. They did not even know that in serving their fellow-men they were serving their

Lord. They fed the hungry, they gave drink to the thirsty, they entertained the stranger, they clothed the naked, they ministered to the sick, they visited the prisoner, because they loved them, and for no other reason. Unselfish love, disinterested devotion, service which asks for no reward,—this is the heart and soul of religion; and the subconscious knowledge of God which is implicit in such love and devotion and service is the only knowledge that really counts.

That being so, the question arises, How shall we best teach religion to children? How shall we best initiate them into the knowledge of God? In nearly all our elementary schools—I speak of these because I know them best—religion is a kind of compulsory extra. Half an hour is set aside for it at the beginning of each morning session. When that half-hour is over religion is done with for the day, and the real work of the school begins. In thus emphasizing the distinction between the religious and the secular life, those who control the education of the young have made a fatal departure from the teaching of Christ. For, in glorifying love as the fulfilling of the law and the only means of salvation, Christ taught us that what is the quintessential element in religion is also the quintessential element in life. The “saved” in the story of the Last Judgment had all been religious without knowing it. In living for others they had gone to the heart of religion and also to the heart of life.

What goes on in the half-hour which is set apart for religious instruction? It would be well if those who talk and write and quarrel about

religious instruction could see for themselves what form it usually takes. When I was a school inspector an inconveniently early train sometimes landed me at a school while the Scripture lesson (as it was called) was in progress. Having greeted the teacher and asked leave to wait in school till the lesson was over, I sat down and listened—and said nothing. But I thought a great deal. For the first thing that struck me was that all the glaring faults of method which the examination system had fostered in our schools, and which, since the abolition of that system, we inspectors had been fighting against, had found a safe asylum in the Scripture half-hour. Parrot-like repetition of what the teacher had said, collective recitation and reading, gabbling and mumbling, collective answering, irregular answering, scribbling on slates, and other objectionable practices were in full swing, and our efforts to extirpate them during the hours for secular instruction were to that extent being counteracted. There was no mistaking the significance of these sinister symptoms. The children were evidently being crammed for a formal examination on a prescribed syllabus. As usually happens in such cases, the victims of the cramming process took little or no interest in what they were doing, while their teachers were too much occupied with the work of preparing for the impending examination to think about anything else.

This is, I think, a fairly accurate account of what went on in most of the Denominational (or “Non-Provided”) Schools. In the Board (or Council or “Provided”) Schools the Scripture lesson was somewhat shorter, but it was as a rule carried out

according to a prescribed syllabus and in preparation for a yearly examination.

Such were the methods by which nine-tenths of the children in this country were initiated into the knowledge of God. I say nothing as to the matter of the Scripture lesson, though there is much to be said on this point,—nothing as to the confusion which it perpetuated between conflicting conceptions of God, nothing as to the hypocrisy of teaching children what one has ceased to believe oneself. It is with the methods employed by the teachers, with or without their own consent—methods of drill and cram—that I am now concerned. Have things changed since those days? Not materially, as far as I can see. The Diocesan Inspector is still in evidence. Syllabuses of religious instruction are still prescribed, and yearly examinations are still held. Can we wonder that our country is relapsing, as religious people say it is, into paganism?

What is to be done? The first and most obvious thing to do is to cease to examine children in what we call religious knowledge. If by religious knowledge we mean knowledge of God, and if it is by losing himself in love and service that man attains to knowledge of God, then the folly of pretending to examine in religious knowledge is self-evident, and some other method of gauging the spiritual vitality of a school must be found. How can you examine children in unselfishness, in singleness of heart, in brotherly love? You can, if you please, examine them in knowledge of hymns and texts and catechisms and Bible stories. But, in the first place, knowledge of these things no more constitutes religious knowledge than knowledge of

the definitions of geographical terms or of the names of capes and bays constitutes knowledge of geography, or than knowledge of dates of battles and names of kings and queens constitutes knowledge of history. Indeed, the difference between formal and real knowledge is incomparably greater in the case of religion than of any secular subject; for in religion, formal knowledge is at best of doubtful value, whereas real knowledge, knowledge of God, is the very end and aim of man's existence, the very life of his inmost life. The value of formal knowledge in the eyes of the formalist is that it can be drilled into the pupil, and having been drilled into him can be duly tested and measured and reported on, whereas real knowledge is a prize which he must win for himself. And, in the second place, if it is thought desirable that children should have some knowledge of hymns and texts and catechisms and Bible stories, why should not the teacher be trusted to give such knowledge? Why should he not be released from the hateful necessity of cramming children for an examination in it? He would then be free to approach the Scripture lesson in another spirit and from another point of view.

He would also be free to ask himself what he can do to give his pupils religious instruction, in the true sense of the phrase—initiation into the knowledge of God. Well, if he can do nothing else, he can at least make it possible for them to learn the great lesson of disinterested devotion, of unselfish love. Let me say again that the words *disinterested* and *unselfish* are all-important. Devotion to a cause or a community does not

necessarily take one to God. If it did, the robber who was loyal to his gang would be one of the children of light. Nor does love of a human being. Nor does religious zeal. The pre-war devotion of the German to his country was a noble sentiment as far as it went; but because it did not go far enough, because it stopped short with his country, because there was no love of Humanity at the heart of it, there was a strain of selfishness in it which demoralized it and him, and led him to perpetrate various crimes and atrocities in the full belief that the end—the triumph of his country—justified whatever means might be taken to secure it. The mutual love of two human beings may be nothing better than an *égoïsme à deux*. And much of the devotion which has been given to God, to Christ, to the Church, to the Saints, has been fundamentally selfish, having been inspired by the fear of eternal punishment, by the hope of being numbered among the elect, by the desire to secure temporal boons or even to compass immoral ends. Many a man who believed himself to be religious has prayed for vengeance on his enemies or for success in nefarious schemes.

If love and devotion and service are to take us to God, they must be purified of every taint of self. No profit and loss calculation must enter into them. They must be given because we cannot help giving them, because their objects draw us with irresistible force. How is this purification of the heart to be effected? How is the lesson of unselfish love to be learnt? In answer to this question I can but repeat my

“golden rule”: Devotion to a cause or a community must always have at the heart of it devotion to a larger cause or a wider community, till we come at last to the largest of all causes and the widest of all communities, to the service of God, to membership of His Kingdom. This is the only pathway to God. There are no short cuts to salvation. “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” We must pass through all the stages in our pilgrimage and rest in none till we enter into the rest which transcends repose, the peace which passeth all understanding, rest in the Infinite and the Ideal. Yet there is no community so small, no cause so humble, but if we serve it unselfishly and uncalculatingly, it has the Infinite and the Ideal at the heart of it. “Forasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me.” It is this reaching on into the Infinite, in the endeavour to escape from self, which distinguishes religion and morality; or rather which moralizes religion and spiritualizes morality, and makes the two no longer two but one. The failure of the Positivists to develop the religion of Humanity, the failure of the Ethical Societies to evangelize mankind, are easily accounted for. There can never be a religion of Humanity; for, though the service of Humanity is a noble end of action, it is not an end in itself. There must needs be a nobler service at the heart of it, if it is not to degenerate into a mere effort to diffuse creature comforts,—to raise wages, for example, all the world over and shorten the hours

of work. The best service that we can render to Humanity is to help it to realize its own ideal; and its ideal is something beyond itself.

Let us go back to our children. If they are to become religious, if they are to attain to knowledge of God, they must learn the lesson of disinterested devotion. They are ready to learn this lesson—Kidd and Bateson are agreed on this point—readier than we are; for they are less given to making profit and loss calculations, to weighing the advantages and disadvantages to themselves of proposed courses of action. When a cause appeals to them, they give their hearts to it and ask for no reward. But they must learn the lesson for themselves. We cannot drill it into them. We cannot coerce them into unselfishness. We cannot bribe them to forget themselves. For coercion and bribery appeal to selfish motives, to fear in the one case, to greed in the other; and to teach unselfishness through an appeal to selfish motives is to undermine the foundations which we are trying to lay. The best thing that we can do is to set children free to learn the greatest of all lessons for themselves. Here we come to one of the fundamental principles for which the advocates of reform in education stand. They believe in learning by doing as opposed to learning by listening and memorizing and obeying the word of command. This principle is applicable to education because it is applicable to life. It is, therefore, as applicable to religious as to secular education. Indeed, it is through its action that the distinction between religious and

secular education effaces itself and the two merge into one. Experience has proved that if learning by doing is to answer its purpose, a generous measure of freedom must be given to children; for if, when they are trying to do things, you insist on holding their hands and directing all their movements, they will do little and learn less.

We must begin, then, by giving children freedom for self-development, and, with freedom, so much of sympathetic help and judicious guidance as they need and can turn to good account. This takes us back to ground which has already been covered. We have seen that in the atmosphere of freedom interest in work and joy in working take the place of the distaste for work, the unwilling obedience, the perfunctory discharge of duties, which the dogmatic, dictatorial, disciplinary type of education has always tended to produce. And we have seen that when children are happy in their school life, their happiness will overflow of its own accord into the lives of others, and the spirit of comradeship will awake in the school.

The spirit of comradeship is not *necessarily* unselfish. It is compatible with collective selfishness in each of the many forms that the latter assumes. But it is *essentially* unselfish; and when it first awakes among children, as the natural overflow of their joy and goodwill, there is something spontaneous and uncalculating in it which keeps it free from the taint of self. Such a spirit is potentially religious, in the deepest sense of the word; there is no side of the child's life which it

will not illumine and inspire; and if it develops itself under favourable conditions, there is no height of heroism or self-sacrifice to which it will not at last ascend.

I leave it to others to make suggestions as to worship and ceremonial, doctrinal instruction, the study of the Bible, and—above all—the use of music to awake or quicken religious emotion. These, as it seems to me, are accessories of religion, accessories which are indispensable for some temperaments and some types of mind, but not for others. The life and soul of religion, the essential element in it which no one can dispense with, is disinterested devotion, unselfish love. Children will teach themselves this greatest of all lessons, if we will make it possible for them to do so. If they do not teach it to themselves, it will never be taught.

Let me, in conclusion, repeat what I said in the opening chapter—that the need for religion, as I have interpreted the word, has never been so urgent as it is to-day. The world is sick unto death, and the malady from which it is suffering is, in a word, selfishness. Individual selfishness is rampant. The greed for gain and the thirst for pleasure are, perhaps, more insatiable and more general than they have ever been. And collective or corporate selfishness is an even graver malady. The selfishness of this or that nation, or of this or that political party, is delaying—fatally delaying—the re-settlement of the disordered world. The selfishness of this or that ring of capitalists, or of this or that trade union,

is strangling the economic life of mankind and threatening to disintegrate society. And collective selfishness is an insidious as well as a malignant malady, for it easily mistakes itself for unselfishness, the individual priding himself on his loyalty to the community, even while the community—the clique, the gang, the ring, the syndicate, the party, the trade union—is working for essentially selfish ends.

There is but one remedy for this desperate disorder, the remedy which I have already indicated. In the crisis through which we are passing, religion, and religion alone, can save us. But though religion is still widely professed, it shows no sign of saving us. Why? Because profession is one thing and practice another, and because, if practice is to be real and effective, it must be begun in the nursery and the schoolroom. Hitherto profession has preceded practice in religion as in all the branches of secular instruction. We have taught our children to profess religion. We have not taught them, or encouraged them, or even allowed them to practise it. Over the whole field of education the tide is now turning in favour of practice. We are beginning to realize that practice must precede profession; that the subconscious knowledge which is implicit in practice must precede the conscious apprehension of facts, laws and principles, if the latter is to have any meaning or purpose. What is true of education as such is true of religious education. Practice must come first, the practice of pure religion and undefiled, the practice of unselfish kindness, of uncalculating

loyalty, of service which asks for no reward. If it is too late for us adults to master this practical lesson, let us at least set our children free to learn it. When they have mastered it, they will be able to do what we are dreaming of doing—to rebuild the ruined world.

CHAPTER X

ADOLESCENCE

THROUGHOUT this book I have been thinking more of the education of the "masses" than of the "classes."¹ I have three excuses to offer for this. The first, and the least important, is that I happen to know far more about the public elementary school than about any other type or grade of school. The second is that nine-tenths of the children of this country belong to the masses. The third, and the most important, is that the Head Teacher of the elementary school is freer to go his own way and do what seems right in his eyes than the Head Teacher of the secondary school or any other educational institution. For, in the first place, his hands are not tied by the necessity of preparing his pupils for external examinations. And in the second place he has not to reckon with any school tradition which has been built up by the children themselves. Or, if he has to reckon with such a tradition, he finds that it is lightly rooted and readily admits of being modified, or even, if he thinks this desirable, made

¹ By the "masses" I mean those who send their children to elementary schools. By the "classes" I mean the rest of the community. The distinction serves my immediate purpose, but I repudiate it on principle just as I repudiate on principle the distinction between elementary and secondary schools.

an end of. In the secondary school, on the other hand, a school tradition is sure to be built up in course of time, within the limited space in which free activity on the part of the pupils is permitted. And if the school in question happens to be a boarding school of old standing, the dominant tradition,—which, like the recognized government of the school, on which it will have unconsciously modelled itself, is sure to be autocratic rather than democratic in spirit,—may well acquire the power and authority of an *imperium in imperio* and count for more in the lives of the pupils than any other influence. In such a school as Eton or Winchester, for example, Head Masters change and pass, but the school tradition remains; and if a new Head Master came to the school with ideas of his own which he wished to carry out, he would probably find that the established tradition offered a passive but powerful resistance to his projected reforms. As I am advocating revolutionary changes in education, I naturally turn, in my search for pioneers, to the schools in which there is the freest scope for educational experiments. And though the teachers in elementary schools are not all equally free to depart from the beaten track, the broad fact remains that, as a class, they have more freedom than any other class of teachers, and that whenever the Government Inspector and the Local Education Authority happen to be open-minded and sympathetic, their freedom is practically unlimited.

In this chapter I shall have in mind the children of the masses only. The adolescents who belong to the classes are fully provided for. They can stay at their respective secondary schools till they

are seventeen or eighteen years of age; and then a large proportion can go on to the Universities, to Military Colleges, Medical Schools, Engineering Colleges, cramming establishments, and the like. They will not receive an ideal education either at school or college. But so far as the defects of secondary and advanced education coincide, as they do at many points, with those of elementary education, they have already been criticized in these pages, and an attempt has been made to find an antidote to their poison. And so far as their defects are more particularly their own, I must leave them to be dealt with by those who understand their peculiar problems. At any rate the education of the classes is provided for—whether wisely or unwisely, adequately or inadequately—up to and even beyond the threshold of manhood. But the education of the masses has not yet been provided for, to any appreciable extent, beyond the threshold of adolescence; and the problem of providing for it during adolescence is one of the most serious which the community has to face.

A small minority of the children who attend elementary schools move on, at the age of eleven or twelve, to secondary schools, mostly with the view of preparing for the teaching profession. The rest, with a few exceptions,¹ leave school at the age of thirteen or fourteen. The bulk of these begin at once to work for their living. When trade is good they are readily absorbed into various employments. When trade is slack they may have to wait some time before finding work. Taking one year with another one may say that at the age of fourteen or fifteen a large majority

¹ Mostly transferees to technical and "trade" day schools.

of the children of the masses begin to be "on their own" and to "go out into the world." This is the most critical period in the child's life. The influence of "the world" is on balance for evil; and his school, if it is of the conventional type, will not have armed him against it. Its own influence will have been depressing and devitalizing rather than edifying and inspiring. He will have found its needlessly strict discipline irksome, and its daily round of work monotonous and dull. His dominant feeling will be one of weariness and boredom, and he will be ready to welcome almost any change. While he is in this mood he will go out into the world as a worker and a wage-earner; and the worldly world—the world in which altruism and idealism are at a heavy discount—will claim him as its own. He will then be ready to fall into line with the generation in whose footsteps he has been treading, ready to accept and live by its materialistic tradition, and in due course to hand this on, unaltered except in unessential details, to the generation that is following in his steps.

Will "continued education" provide a remedy for this state of things? Who can say? Our experience of continued education is so limited that it is easier to make guesses at its future than to interpret its past. One of the first questions which challenge us when we try to forecast its future is whether attendance at continuation schools ought or ought not to be compulsory. The question is of great importance and deserves to be most carefully considered. As a national obligation, attendance at continuation schools is at present out of the question, and will long remain

so, for the supply of schools and teachers is quite inadequate, and many years must pass before either deficiency can be made good. But there are individual cases in which compulsion can be tried, and in point of fact is being tried. Some of the great industrial firms such as Cadbury's and Debenham's have started continuation schools in connexion with their own business establishments, and are requiring all their young employees to attend them. Is it wise of them to do so? Diotīma, the teacher whose first aim is to make her pupils happy, has considered this question, and as she has carried on a large continuation school in London with conspicuous success for the past two years, her answer to it is, I think, well worth recording. She finds that her pupils, mostly girls, who come from all parts of London to the large "Stores" with which her school is connected, have such unpleasant memories of the elementary schools which they have recently left that they are strongly prejudiced against education as such and are at first unwilling to attend her school. But she finds that, after a brief experience of it, their *a priori* prejudice against it dies away and they look forward with pleasure to their school hours and throw themselves with hearty good will into the life and work of their new community. They have, of course, been exceptionally fortunate in the school which they have been required to attend. Had their continuation school done no more than carry on the tradition of their day schools, they would have attended it unwillingly and derived little or no benefit from its training or its general influence. What Diotīma

suggests, then, is that for the first month of his (or her) new life, each employee should be required to attend the continuation school which the Firm has provided, and at the end of that month should be free either to stay on in school or to leave it. She is convinced that if the employees have to attend school and work in it against the grain, it will do them more harm than good, but that if after a month's experience of the school they attend it willingly and because they find their hours in it pleasant and profitable, it will give them a bias in favour of education in general and self-education in particular which will carry them very far. This seems to me an eminently sane proposal, and I should like to see it tried in every school which a Firm has opened for the benefit of its own employees. If it emptied some schools it would, in doing so, expose their inefficiency and their unfitness for the important work which they were intended to carry on.

We have now to ask ourselves on what general principles continuation schools, as they come into being, ought to be conducted. Here, as it happens, we have been given a lead which we shall do well to follow. The Boy Scout movement¹ is by far the most successful attempt which has yet been made to provide for the education of adolescents. And it owes its success to the fact that it makes due provision for the satisfaction of two imperious

¹ The Woodcraft Chivalry movement has much in common with the Boy Scout movement, but diverges from it at certain points. It lays stress, as its name suggests, on nearness to "nature," and advocates camp life for prolonged periods. Also it allows girls as well as boys to become "Woodlings."

needs of man's nature,—the need to realize one's own self, and the need to work with and for others. The Boy Scout is encouraged to develop himself in many directions, to make the most of his natural capacities, aptitudes, and tastes. He is encouraged to do this, partly in order that he may realize his own self, partly in order that he may become a helpful member of society. For he is also encouraged to play his part as a member of a community, to identify its interests with his own, to be loyal to it, to work for it, to serve it. In other words, in the Boy Scout philosophy of education the balance between the claims of the individual and of the communal self is steadily maintained, and the way is thus opened for the ideal or universal self to come to the birth, and for the highest of all causes to make its appeal to the heart. To achieve and maintain this balance should be the primary aim of all who are interested in education; and in no branch of education is the need for the realization of this aim more urgent than in that which deals with adolescence.

From first principles let us turn to ways and means. It is only in the more populous centres, where there are large factories and large retail trading establishments, that schools of the type which Diotima is conducting are likely to be found. In rural villages and in the smaller towns the problem of providing for continued education would be comparatively simple if the reform of education which I advocate had made greater headway in our elementary schools than it has yet done or seems likely to do. For such a school as I have in my mind would need but a moderate

addition (if any) to its premises and its staff in order to be able to carry on the further education of its own pupils. And there would be no difficulty in getting its ex-pupils to return to it. When children are happy in their school life they have no need of bribe or threat to induce them to continue their education. Having left their school (when paid work was found for them) as an ordinary elementary school, they would return to it, at the earliest opportunity, as a continuation school. Having left it as children, they would return to it, perhaps the next day, as adolescents. But these would be changes of name, and of name only. The break in their lives would be purely economic. Their hours in the day-school would be cut down by about two-thirds; but the educational and social life of the school would go on as before. The spirit of free activity and the spirit of comradeship would continue to dominate it; and if its pupils found their hours in the day continuation school too short for them, they would of their own accord form clubs and circles for evening work. Such a school, under the tutelage of its two guardian spirits, would sooner or later become the real centre of the social and intellectual life of the parish; and the multiplication of such schools would bring about a much-needed revolution in the life of rural England.

The overflow of social life and educational activity from the daytime into the evening would not be confined to the villages and the smaller towns. Wherever there was a school which had won the goodwill and loyal support of its pupils, and was in consequence well attended—I am

assuming that attendance at continuation schools is to be voluntary—the pupils would speedily find that eight hours a week in school were not enough for them, and would begin to form societies for educational and recreative activity out of school hours. Such at least has been the experience of Diotīma in her large continuation school in the heart of London. She tells me that her school is open every evening in the week except Saturday, from 6 to 8 p.m., and that during those hours attendance on the part of both pupils and teachers is purely voluntary, the teachers being volunteers in the further sense that they give their services for nothing. How well this evening school is attended, and how ready the pupils are to avail themselves of the facilities that it offers will be gathered from the following list of societies and classes which make use of it—

(1) Two French Circles.

(2) Art Club (painting, carving, embroidery, designing).

(3) Folk Song Society.

(4) Dramatic Society.

(3) and (4) are now combining (October 1920) to produce an Operetta towards the end of the session.

(5) Dress-making Class.

(6) Millinery Class.

(7) Cookery Class (Boys as well as Girls).

(8) Carpentry Class (Girls as well as Boys).

(9) Dancing Class (morris, country and ball-room dances).

(10) Shooting Club (at miniature rifle range).

- (11) Boxing Club (taught by a professional).
- (12) Girl Guides (who attend various classes in order to qualify for "badges").

Theatre parties are formed for Friday evenings, and on Saturday afternoons there are country rambles and football matches. There is also a library evening, in which books are taken out and advice as to choice of books is given—if asked for.

In these extra-sessional activities, which are, I repeat, voluntary, in the fullest sense of the word, we see the two master desires which education ought to foster (and so seldom does)—the desire for self-development and the desire for social life—working hand in hand. This they are predestined to do if they are allowed to fulfil their respective destinies. For though it is true that "each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth and the life," it is equally true that "the united spirit of life . . . is your only true self."¹

And what a splendid preparation for the wise and profitable use of leisure is being made in these evening clubs and circles. Since the war the working classes, as we call them, have had their hours of work, in nearly all occupations, materially shortened. What use are they making, what use are they going to make, of their increased leisure? I am told that in the mining and manufacturing districts their favourite amusements are whippet racing, pigeon fancying, attending football matches, betting and drinking. This is not a very exalted

¹ From *Light on the Path*, by M. C.

level of recreative activity. Is there no hope of their ever rising above it? There is a widespread impression among the upper classes, especially among the persons who pride themselves on their "culture," that the working classes have a congenital incapacity for making a profitable use of leisure, that their shortened hours of work will thus be disadvantageous to them as well as to their employers, and that therefore in their own interest as well as in the interest of the whole community they should revert to the longer hours which were usual before and during the war. There is no ground whatever for this ultra-pessimistic assumption. The workers of this and other countries may have lost the art of employing leisure, but they have it in them to make an excellent use of it, and Diotima and those who are working on her lines will help them to do so.

Let us go back a hundred years or so to the days before the poisonous harvest which the Industrial Revolution sowed had fully ripened. From 1769 to 1824 A.D. the wages of the Spitalfields silk weavers were fixed, under an Act of Parliament, by the Lord Mayor, Recorder and Aldermen, and masters who paid lower or higher wages were liable to a fine of £50. Taking one year with another the wages were high enough to enable the weavers to live in decent comfort and enjoy a reasonable amount of leisure. What use did they make of their leisure? What use were the leisured members of the "upper classes" at that time making of their superabundant leisure? For the most part they were engaged in gambling, duelling, dancing, swaggering about at fashionable resorts, hunting,

shooting, horse-racing, cock-fighting, illicit love-making, and hard drinking. The recreative activities of the Spitalfields weavers were of a different order from these. An interesting picture of their varied interests was given in 1840 by Edward Church, a solicitor, who had lived for thirty years among them in Spital Square. Of those thirty years, fourteen preceded and sixteen followed the repeal of the Wages Act. The Act applied to London only; and during the whole period from 1810 to 1840 the competition with the London silk industry of the labour-sweating, *rate-aided* silk industries in provincial towns was making itself increasingly felt. After the repeal of the Act the wages of the Spitalfields weavers fell so low that in order to live they had to work increasingly long hours. Hence the gradual decay of the various societies for mutual instruction and recreation which they had formed. Church describes these societies in the following words: "The Spitalfields *Mathematical Society* is second in point of time to the Royal Society and still exists. There was an *Historical Society*, which was merged in the *Mathematical Society*. There was a *Floricultural Society*, very numerous attended, but now extinct. The weavers were almost the only botanists of their day in the metropolis. They passed their leisure hours, and generally the whole family dined on Sundays, at the little gardens in the environs of London, now mostly built upon, in small rooms about the size of modern omnibuses (1840) with a fireplace at the end. *There was an Entomological Society*, and they were the first entomologists in the Kingdom.

The Society is gone. They had a *Recitation Society* for Shakespearean readings, as well as reading other authors, which is almost forgotten. They had a *Musical Society*, but this is also gone. There was a *Columbarian Society* which gave a silver medal as a prize for the best pigeon of the fancy breed. . . . They were great bird fanciers, and breeders of canaries, many of whom now cheer their quiet hours while at the loom. Their breed of spaniels called Splashers were of the best sporting blood. . . . Many of the weavers were Freemasons, but there are now very few left, and these old men. Many of the houses in Spitalfields had porticos, with seats at their door, where the weavers might be seen on summer evenings enjoying their pipes. The porticos have given way to improvements of the pavements.”

An idyllic picture this, but as pathetic as it is idyllic. The gradual decay of the once flourishing societies, under the inexorable pressure of falling wages and lengthening hours of work, was a veritable tragedy. But the fight of the weavers against adverse fate was not in vain. For in the course of it they showed what the working classes were able to do in the way of recreation and self-education when they had decent wages *and leisure*.¹ In the pre-factory days when weaving and other industries were carried on in the homes of the

¹ I wish Church had told us something about the early education of the weavers. Some of them may have attended private schools, but I imagine that in those days there was a good deal of effective education in some at least of the homes of the “working classes.” It is possible that one reason why the weavers were able to do so much for themselves was that they had never attended public elementary schools!

workers, the combination of decent wages with leisure was by no means rare. Then came the Industrial Revolution, accompanied in the rural districts by the enclosure of the Common Lands, and in the world of ideas by the rise of Political Economy, which taught, or was understood to teach, that labour was a commodity to be bought in the cheapest and sold in the dearest market. The joint action of these three movements reduced the working classes to a state of serfdom and semi-starvation. Wages fell so low that in order to keep body and soul together the labourers, both in town and country, *and their children*, had to work from thirteen to fifteen hours a day. Having no leisure they naturally lost the art of making a profitable use of leisure. Then, to make matters worse, came a wave of puritanical Evangelicalism which swept over the country and carried with it the notion (much favoured by the employers of labour) that all recreation, at any rate on the part of the working classes, was "carnal," and that the harder the poor worked and the less they enjoyed life, the more likely they were to be "saved." At last things came to such a pass that the public-house became the only place of recreation, and drinking the only distraction from the monotony of never-ending and ill-paid toil.

The workers now have reasonably high wages and a fair amount of leisure. What use will they make of the latter? It is possible that at first they will go in with redoubled energy for their favourite amusements—whippet racing, pigeon fancying, football matches, and the rest. And they will probably give more time to gardening,

which has, I believe, always attracted them whenever allotments were available. But the need for a higher and wider range of activities will gradually make itself felt. If the workers cannot at once rise to the level of the Spitalfields weavers, the upper classes, who either robbed them of their leisure or acquiesced—with pious resignation—in the robbery must bear the blame of this. The Spitalfields weavers have given a lead to the workers of to-day which they will not fail to follow, especially if they have been allowed to have varied interests in their elementary schools, and encouraged to form societies for mutual improvement and amusement in their continuation schools.

I am perhaps looking far into the future, but I am confident that the time of which I dream will come at last. For, above all, the Spitalfields weavers, now that the story of their doings has been given to the world, have killed the wicked superstition that the working classes have a congenital disinclination and incapacity for self-improvement. They have killed this superstition by proving that it is a superstition, and nothing more. And there was need for it to be killed. When the “masters” in town and country—the millowners, the squires and the farmers—had done their best to debase and brutalize their labourers, by persistently over-working and under-paying them, they and the rest of the upper classes—male and female, lay and clerical—had the effrontery to say that the social order, *as it existed then*, had been ordained by God;¹ and in the strength of

¹ If a novelist in those days expressed sympathy with the poor in their troubles, or even did no more than draw a

this self-flattering assumption they turned round upon the victims of their own rapacity and cruelty, and said (as some of them still say) that they were (and are) base-born brutes.

No, the lower strata of society are no more "base-born" than the higher. Their natural ability is as great.¹ So is their latent capacity for self-sacrifice and disinterested devotion. I do not say that all men are born equal in these respects. I am very sure that they are all born unequal. But I do say most emphatically that we have no evidence that there is any natural inequality between class and class. It is in respect of their social, not of their protoplasmic heritage, of the circumstances² of birth, not of birth itself, that the lower strata are on the whole less fortunate than the upper. They are born into an environment which is as a rule narrower, ruder, more cramping, more depressing, less stimulating, less

faithful picture of their miserable condition, he was liable to be censured for impiously encouraging rebellion against the decrees of Providence. *Jane Eyre* was attacked by some of the critics on this score; and Macaulay, who might have been expected to resent oppression and injustice, could find nothing in *Hard Times* but "sullen socialism."

¹ Professor Cizek, the Viennese Art Master (see footnote to p. 75), told one of his interviewers that his best pupils come from the "proletariat": "I would rather have the proletariat child—I would much rather. He has more 'attack' and is less spoiled." In some of our schools original composition in prose and verse is now encouraged by the teachers; and the response which the children are making to this appeal to their creative impulse is on the whole surprisingly good. But the best compositions that I have yet seen came from a Higher Standard *Elementary* School in a fourth-rate manufacturing town in the North.

² The disadvantages in respect of social inheritance are not all on the side of the "lower classes." But the balance of advantage is certainly against them.

inspiring; an environment which cuts them off, in no small measure, from the world's great tradition of art, of culture, of high thinking, of refined and gentle living; an environment which can scarcely fail to stamp its defects, both positive and negative, on their impressionable hearts during childhood and adolescence. It is for education, first of the child and then of the adolescent, to redress this inequality by giving those who have been less fortunate in their start in life opportunities for all-round self-development. It is for education to lift the average level of the lower social strata, in respect of culture, to the average level of the higher. It is for education to do this, and then to do something more than this. The differences between stratum and stratum in respect of culture (in the true and deep sense of the word) are as nothing compared with the difference in this respect between man as he is and man as he might be. To lead the whole human race, without respect to class, in the direction of its own ideal, is the noblest task that education can set itself. And it is a task which education alone can undertake with any hope of success.

CHAPTER XI

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

THE reform of education for which I plead, if and so far as it materializes, will affect all types and grades of schools. One result of this will be that sooner or later the distinction between primary and secondary education will be discredited, and the distinction between preparatory and advanced education will take its place. So long as the former distinction holds good, secondary schools will continue to be strongholds of snobbishness and class prejudice. I look forward to the day when the spirit of comradeship will dominate all our schools, and to a somewhat later day when, as the result of this, the same spirit will dominate the whole community and in doing so will sweep away all distinctions, or at least whatever is invidious and anti-social in the distinctions, between class and class. It is perhaps oversanguine of me to dream of either day. But the dream comes to me and possesses me, and I am very sure that until it is realized the reconstruction of society on the only basis that is intrinsically sound and durable, the basis of co-operation and mutual goodwill, will not take place, and that if the dream is never to be realized the reconstruction of society on such a basis will never take place.

Self is our arch-enemy,—the self that seeks to aggrandize and indulge itself, at whatever cost to others. But there is another self which is our guardian angel,—the self which seeks to transcend itself and finds that it cannot do so except by living in the lives of others. The way to self-transcendence, in man as in all other living things, is the way of self-sacrifice, the way of dying to the actual, so as to make possible the outgrowth of the ideal. Self-transcendence through self-sacrifice cannot be *taught*, as Kidd dreams of doing, and as the German State and the Christian Churches have vainly tried to do. But the spirit of self-sacrifice can be awakened and helped to evolve itself; and it is to this task that all who wish for a better and a happier world should direct their energies. Kidd has done well to emphasize the distinction between the protoplasmic and the social heritage of the individual, and to insist on the limitless transforming power of the latter. On this point he is, I think, entirely right, and the biological fatalists are entirely wrong. He is right too when he lays stress on the impressionableness and adaptability of the young, and when he dreams of the regeneration of the world through the awakening in the young of the spirit of self-sacrifice. But he goes far astray when he proposes, in all seriousness, that altruism, the spirit of self-sacrifice, shall be drilled into the young “like an ordinary school-lesson,” and when he assumes, as he seems to do, that any “qualified” teacher is equal to this task. It is ignorance of the true inwardness of education, the problems of which he has never seriously studied, which has misled

him, as it has misled, and still misleads, on the one hand our statesmen and church dignitaries and all the upholders of the existing order of things, and, on the other hand, our political agitators and red revolutionaries and all who wish to make sudden and sweeping changes in the existing order, or even to overthrow it. For one thing, neither he nor they have realized that the education which takes advantage of the impressionableness of the child in order to stamp a particular pattern on his mind and heart, tends to deaden, and at last to destroy, his impressionableness in the very act of so misusing it.

The spirit of self-sacrifice can *not* be drilled into the young. Let us make our minds quite clear on this point. But it can be liberated and evoked. To do this is the function of the teacher; but it is a function which not one teacher in a hundred is at present able to fulfil. For the teachers themselves are the products of the very educational methods which have been the chief cause of our troubles, and yet which they, and they alone, can transform. This is the tragic dilemma that confronts us. We must face it with resolution, avoiding in our attitude towards it the opposite extremes of optimism and pessimism,—the dangerous optimism which leads Kidd to say that “there is no ideal in conformity with the principles of civilization dreamed of by any dreamer or idealist which cannot be realized within the lifetime of those around him,” and the paralysing pessimism of those who hold that human nature is the same in all ages, that the destiny of each of us is wrapped up in a speck of protoplasm, and that the only

remedy for our social disorders is to make the struggle for material possession the recognized basis of our communal life. There is a middle way between these extremes; and, though it is hard to find, when it has been found it is worth following. It is through the gradual diffusion from age to age of the spirit of self-sacrifice which a reformed education has liberated in the young, that the world will be regenerated in the fullness of God's time.

If there were ten teachers in the land who knew how to liberate that spirit, and if each of these could inoculate with his ideas and his enthusiasm ten teachers of the next generation, and so on, in geometrical progression, from generation to generation, they would in due season transform the face of society; but until the number of their followers had grown from tens to hundreds, and from hundreds to thousands and tens of thousands, their regenerative influence would not be widely felt. For the mills of God, as I have already reminded myself, grind very slowly; but they grind unceasingly and they grind exceeding small.

On one point I am, and shall always be, an impenitent idealist. I believe, and shall always believe, that without a change of heart—without a change in our standard of values, in our sense of proportion, in our general outlook on life—no scheme of economic reform, however disinterested may have been the aim of those who planned it, and however wisely it may have been thought out, will do effective work. The canker of selfishness, individual and collective, working as a rule slowly and insidiously, but in some cases swiftly

and violently, will thwart all its beneficent tendencies, and end by eating the heart out of it.

This is one of the lessons which history has taught me, but it is a lesson which men are slow to learn. In an interesting book on France which I have lately read, the author, Mr. Robert Dell, who is an advanced Socialist, takes up a position which is directly opposed to mine. He tells us that "Modern Socialism, especially in France, is not based on any belief in the perfectibility of human nature, but on a frank recognition of its defects. It does not count on a change of heart. . . . In fact, nothing can be done to improve the world except by economic measures; the only way in which human nature can be modified or ever has been modified is by food, climate and economic conditions." It is strange that, with the spectacle of Russia's agony and misery before his eyes, our author should have allowed himself to write this sentence. For if the downfall of Russia under Communist rule has proved nothing else, it has at least proved that the attempt "to improve the world" "by economic measures" only is the road to ruin, not to reform. Mr. Dell says that the only way in which human nature can be modified is by food, climate and economic conditions. But the modifications in human nature which these influences produce are not necessarily improvements. Indeed it may be doubted if food, climate and economic conditions can improve or even modify human nature. What they do modify is the environment into which men are born and in which they are reared. In doing this they give men fresh opportunities for self-

improvement—or the reverse. If the world is to be improved, human nature must be improved—for what do we mean by “the world” but the world of men and women?—and another name for the improvement of human nature is “a change of heart.” But if human nature is to be improved, its own inherent potentialities for good must be helped to realize themselves while it is still possible for them to do so; and this can only be done by education.

No delusion is so deep as that of the revolutionary theorist—Socialist, Syndicalist, Communist, or whatever else he may call himself—who seriously believes that a change of machinery, a sudden and violent change in the politico-economic organization of society, would give us heaven on earth. A change of machinery, without a change of heart, would profit us nothing; and if the change were sudden and violent and on a large scale, it would, through its tremendous dislocation of the whole existing order of things, give us something nearer to hell than to heaven. A Red Terror will never usher in a Millennium. The leaders of a social revolution would have to be disinterested idealists, and the spirit of unselfish comradeship would have to pervade all classes of society if the break-up of the old order was not to make the existing confusion of our social life ten times worse confounded. But, things being as they are, disinterested idealists are as rare on the Left as on the Right wing of our political parties, and the spirit of unselfish comradeship still slumbers in the hearts of men. In a recent interview with a journalist, Maxim Gorky, the famous Russian author, said that “the Soviet’s misfortune was

that 95 per cent. of the Communists were dishonourable." . . . "These pseudo-Communists ought to be executed. After that the revolution perhaps will be what it ought to be." But no revolution will be what it ought to be, unless there has been what Mr. H. G. Wells calls "cultural preparation" for it; and if the cultural preparation is to be really effective it must bring about a "change of heart."

The social revolution in France to which Mr. Dell looks forward will be worse than an utter failure if it is directed as the social revolution in Russia has been, by selfish, dishonest and violent men. Mr. Dell himself sees this danger: "Should there be a spontaneous upheaval," he observes, "it might, unless there were men ready to take control of the movement and organize the revolution, end in nothing but futile violence and ruthless repression. A revolution would be useless unless there were men commanding the general confidence of the proletariat and capable of organizing the new social conditions. The crisis may produce the men, but at present one would find it difficult to name them. There is nobody in France who commands universal confidence as Jaurès did." Yes, and if the social revolution brought another Jaurès to the front, he would be powerless to cope with the selfishness and brutality of some at least of his instruments. Lenin is said to be an honest fanatic, but many of his confederates and subordinates are egoists of the worst type,—selfish, self-indulgent, rapacious, cruel,—and the revolution has in consequence brought infinite misery, *especially economic misery*, on Russia. Mr. Dell com-

plains that the real rulers of France are a ring of selfish and unscrupulous capitalists. The more's the pity. But would it be any gain to France to exchange their rule for that of a ring of red revolutionaries of the type of Lenin's "Commissars"?

Mr. Dell is in favour of "the dictatorship of the proletariat." When I hear this phrase I instinctively ask who are going to be the dictators, and how will they be chosen? For dictatorship is as a rule wielded by one man, or at most by a small clique of men, not by millions. In Russia there are, I believe, three dictators, all self-chosen; and the dictatorship of the proletariat has meant dictation *to* the proletariat, who have been the victims of a harsher, more stringent, and more inquisitorial tyranny than any which they ever endured at the hands of the Tsar and his agents.¹ The truth is that as long as men think to find happiness in self-indulgence instead of in self-

¹ Mr. M. Schwartz, an American Socialist who went to Russia last year, with strong prepossessions in favour of Bolshevism, and who has recently returned after a sojourn of some months in that country, sums up his experiences of Bolshevism in the following words: "Bolshevism is not a government for the people. It is a government of a few people for their own purposes; it is an outrage. There is no free speech in Russia, no free assembly, no free religion; and trials are carried out in secret." Another visitor to Bolshevism in Russia, Mr. Bertrand Russell, an avowed Communist in theory and sentiment, says that "the ultimate source of the whole train of evils [in Russia] lies in the Bolshevism outlook on life: in its dogmatism of hatred and its belief that human nature can be completely transformed by force." The same author reminds us that "love of power is quite as strong a motive, and quite as great a source of injustice, as love of money," and "that the method of violent revolution leading to a minority dictatorship is one peculiarly calculated to create habits of despotism which would survive the crisis by which they were generated."

transcendence, in outward possessions instead of in inward peace,—as long as generation after generation grows up worldly, grasping, pleasure-loving and power-loving, and then proceeds to stamp its own defects (through education) on the rising generation, for so long will all our schemes for improving the world by changing its economic structure miscarry, and the reconstruction of society remain a dream.

“Take no thought for the life what ye shall eat, neither for your body what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.” If we cannot obey the letter of this precept we can at least try to be faithful to its spirit. Meat is eaten for the sake of life. It is a means to an end. But life is an end in itself. “Economic measures” are concerned with the means of living, with meat, raiment and the like. The “change of heart” is a change (for the better) in life itself. Life will always take precedence of the means of living, and the latter will owe such value as they possess to the fact that they are means to an end beyond themselves. This is the final answer to those who hold that the change of heart does not count and that economic measures alone can improve the world. “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you”; added, not by any supernatural agency but by the working of natural laws. For the supreme end of action controls and disposes in due order all the hierarchy of means and ends which leads up to itself. And though, things being as they are, a man may seek the kingdom of heaven and yet lack meat and

raiment, if all the world were seeking the kingdom there would be such peace and harmony and good-fellowship and readiness to co-operate among men, that there would always be an abundant production and an equitable distribution of meat and raiment and other means of living, and all economic difficulties would vanish and all economic problems would be solved.

Mr. Dell holds that the spirit of France is essentially Voltairian, or, to use another word, rationalist. This is, I think, a half-truth. It takes more than a Voltaire, it takes a St. Louis, for one, and many other men and women to build up the ideal Frenchman. If Mr. Dell were right, if his half-truth were a whole truth, I might perhaps despair of the regeneration of France, but I would not despair of the regeneration of the world. Mr. Dell would, I presume, call himself a rationalist. If so, his ideas and his arguments confirm me in my conviction that the thorough-going rationalist is the most irrational of men,—irrational in that he carries his devotion to reason so far as to seek to narrow the Universe to the limits of the sphere within which reason, as he understands the word—the reason that is in bondage to the laws of logic—can safely operate. The world which lies beyond that limited sphere, the world to which intuition gives access and which it invites reason to co-operate with it in exploring, he is content to ignore. But the wider world will not suffer itself to be ignored. The logic of life, and above all of social life, has laws of its own which far transcend in scope and subtlety the laws of the logic of the schools or of the logic of

“common sense”—laws of its own which exact from those who disregard them a penalty which has to be paid to the uttermost farthing. It was rationalism which gave us the coldly calculated ruthlessness of Robespierre. It is rationalism which has given us Lenin, the most pitilessly logical of reasoners, who has sacrificed to the claims of logic the social and economic well-being of his country, the lives of millions, and the happiness of tens of millions of men. The ruin of a great country is a heavy price to pay for logical consistency, but Lenin has paid it gladly, and would if he could pay the further price of the ruin of the world. It is rationalism, I imagine, which has given us the cynical pessimism of Mr. Dell’s own political philosophy, a philosophy whose psychology is so unsound that if it were consistently practised it would find itself in violent conflict with the deeper laws of human nature, and in the course of that unequal conflict would inflict untold misery on the community before it finally acknowledged defeat. Divorced from intuition, reason is reason no longer but at best a poor counterfeit of itself. Antipathy to intuition carries with it antipathy to idealism, which is in the sphere of purpose and action what intuition is in the sphere of cognition and thought. Hence the cynicism of the typical rationalist. Nothing is easier than to flout idealism in the name of reason, and nothing is more certain than that the latent idealism of man’s heart will avenge itself on those who flout it, if they happen to be zealous reformers, by compelling them to become idealists—for what is fanaticism but idealism turned upside down and gone

mad?—without their knowledge and against their will.

The leaders in a revolutionary movement are actuated by various motives, pure and impure. Among these are love of justice, hatred of oppression, belief in social panaceas, delight in destruction, class hatred, personal hatred, greed for possessions, love of power. But in their appeal to the rank and file of their followers, or possible followers, they content themselves as a rule with exploiting two base passions—hatred and greed; and in their desire to inflame these passions they misrepresent facts and motives with an unscrupulousness which too often rises to the level of sheer mendacity. No social structure which is built on such a foundation as this can hope to endure. Hatred, greed, and mendacity are disintegrative influences, and they will be at work from the very beginning. The revolution, if it materializes, will run a riotous course and at last provoke a counter-revolution and a temporary triumph for the forces of reaction. Then will follow, in a dreary round, social stagnation, social unrest, social repression, social strife, and a gradual gathering of the storm clouds, till at last another revolutionary thunderstorm, equally violent and equally futile, will shake the world.

*Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.*

If a durable social structure is to be built, a change of heart must prepare the way for it. The spirit of comradeship, of co-operation, of fellowship in devotion to a high ideal, must diffuse itself through the world. As it diffuses itself, however slowly,

there will be healing in its wings; and, one by one, our troubles, our difficulties, and our grievances will melt away like mists before the rising sun. In every sphere of man's social activity it will make for co-operation rather than for competition, for good will rather than for ill will, for peace rather than for strife. It will blunt the sharp edges of our odious class-distinctions, and go far towards effacing them; for under its influence the aristocrat and the plutocrat will begin to learn that "pride, however concealed, is littleness." It will level down the monstrous inequalities of wealth, which are so potent a cause of social unrest. Under its influence the millionaire will realize that he is a social anomaly, a cancerous outgrowth on the body politic, and that the best thing he can do for himself and for his country is to commit economic suicide. In trade it will make profiteering impossible, and promote fair and honourable dealing between producers and merchants, between merchants and retailers, between retailers and consumers. In industry it will make for co-partnership between employers and employees, and for a voluntary limitation of profits on the part of the former. In politics it will make corruption impossible and heal the bitterness of party strife. In religion, which is the most fruitful of all causes of anger and unrest, it will make for tolerance and charity, and so prepare the way for co-operation, on the part of the churches and sects, in the service of the Most High. So beneficent will be its subtle influence that as it passes on its way, ever widening the sphere of its activity, all our social problems will gradually solve themselves, all

our social maladies will gradually work out their own cure, and the need for revolutionary schemes of social reform will at last cease to be felt.

“But you cannot change human nature. Men will be greedy, selfish, self-indulgent and quarrelsome to the end of time.” So the cynic and the pessimist will protest; and one would imagine, from the way they talk, that they knew all about human nature, that they had “gone round about it and told the towers thereof and marked well its bulwarks,” that they had mapped out all its limitations, gauged all its possibilities, fathomed all its mysteries.

What is essential in human nature cannot be changed. If this is what the pessimists mean they are right; but this is not what they mean. Human nature as such, human nature in its totality, cannot be changed. Nor do I wish to change it. I wish it to be free to evolve itself, to transcend itself, to actualize its infinite potentialities, to find its true self, to realize its own ideal, to tell us what it really is. Set it free to do this, and it will work out its own salvation at its own good pleasure; and the reform of our social life will be but an incident in this mighty drama. At present it seems to be thwarting its own efforts, and baffling its own prayers. I will make the pessimists a present of the average adult man, though I think they do less than justice even to him. The victim of twenty years of dogmatic direction towards false ideals, enforced by disciplinary compulsion and repression, will not easily change his attitude towards life; and we must not count on him to rebuild our ruined world. But if I make this concession to the

pessimists, I must ask them in return to "give me the young." If they will do so I will promise them, not "in the lifetime of those around" me, but in some far-off and indeterminable future, a better and a happier world than this.

Distrust of human nature, whether on the part of the reactionary or the revolutionary—I know not which is the greater pessimist—will never give us the new world. Faith, and faith alone, will give it to us,—faith in the infinite possibilities with which the new-born child is charged; faith in the transformative, or rather in the liberative and stimulative, influence of education; faith in the meaning and purpose of the drama of man's life; faith in the wonder and the glory of the world in which we live; faith in the magnetic power of the unattainable ideal; faith, above all, in the orientation of the heart of man, of the heart of the child who is father to the man, towards truth and beauty and love. It is not where statesmen deliberate or where anarchists hatch plots; it is not in the Senate or the Chamber of Deputies; it is not in the counting-house or the market-place; it is not in the laboratory or the factory; it is not on the platform or in the pulpit; it is not in the press or on the stage—that the foundations of the new world are to be laid: it is where ideals are still waiting and will ever wait, eagerly yet patiently, to be realized; it is in the nursery, the home, and the school.

THE END

*In the course of a
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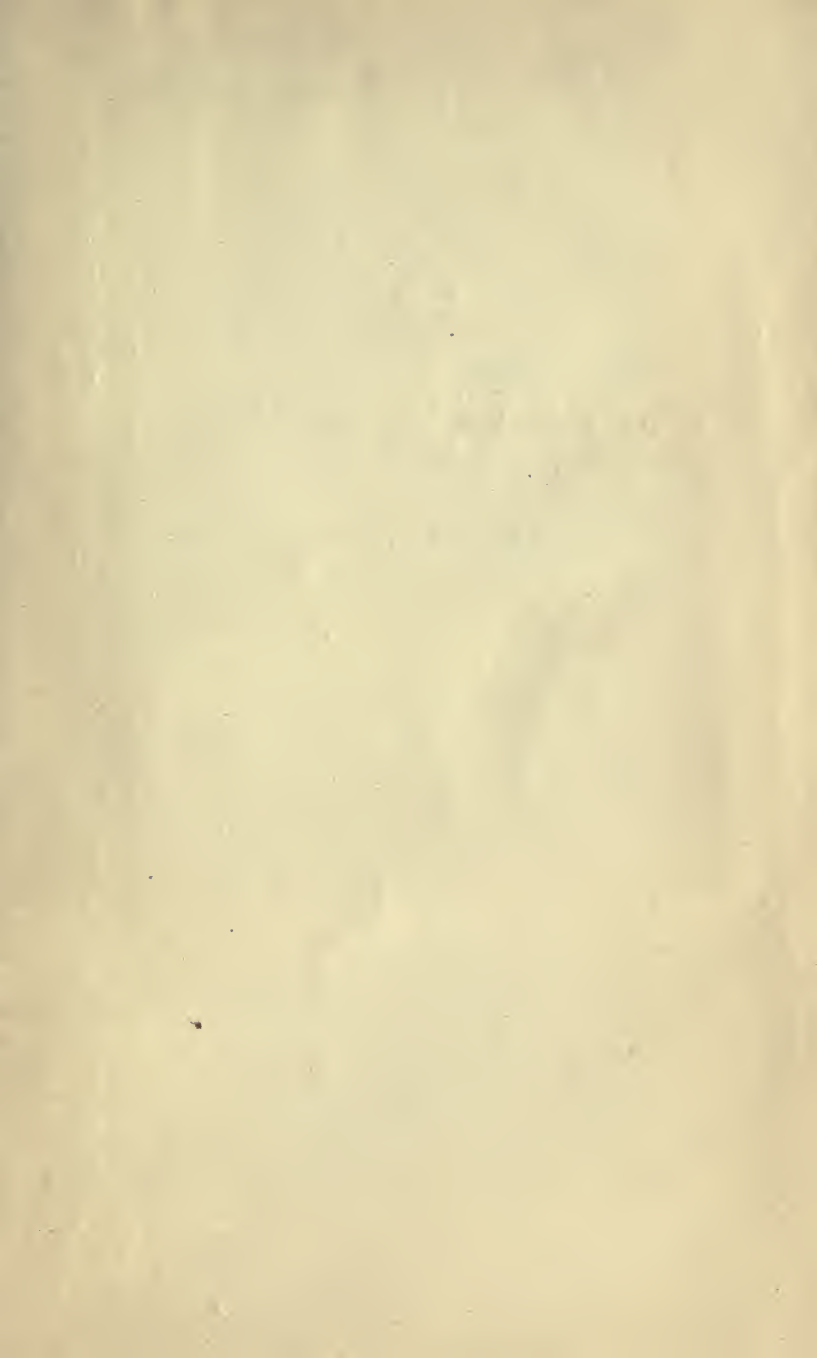
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